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"THE BOND OF PEACE."

"THE BOND OF PEACE."

*"Let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed
and in truth."*



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PREFACE.

IN publishing these Papers, I must explain that they were never intended to appear as a separate volume, but were merely preliminary to the main subject on which I was about to write—"The Teachings of the Sects."

I am myself indebted for what I know of true Religion—over and above what I have learnt directly from God's Word—to so many different Sections of the Church of Christ, that I have felt a great desire to impart some of the distinctive instruction I have thus gained, as far as I was enabled to do so.

Owing each of them, as I do, a large debt of gratitude, I cannot but deeply deplore the enmity that appears to subsist between them, and have therefore longed to make an attempt, however feeble, to provoke the members of Christ's mystical Body to Love. We all need to be aroused, first and

foremost, to a greater and more ardent devotion to the Person of our Lord Himself, for only by "having the same love," can we ever become "likeminded." (See Phil. ii. 2.)

"Charity will cover a multitude of sins," and why not of errors in our fellow-Christians, whilst we look at the great and blessed possessions which we have in common? Error, putting it in its worst light, cannot be more than sin, and error, more or less, we all hold, whilst at the same time every branch of the Church has been permitted to maintain peculiarly some aspect of Truth.

I have hoped for many years that some one thoroughly competent to undertake the task, would search out these special teachings, and put them together, pressing them unitedly, instead of separately, and disproportionately upon the Christian Church. But as far as I know this has not been attempted by any writer. Therefore, at last, although such an attempt seemed very presumptuous, I resolved that if no one else would write upon the subject, I would; as any such book would be better than none at all, and even if it failed to profit anyone else, it would

at least be profitable to my own soul that I should dwell upon the excellencies, rather than the mistakes of my fellow-Christians.

My ultimate object however, was the promotion of Church-fellowship; and the objections to this that would be made by exclusive Christians of various opinions arose in my mind; and I felt to meet, and so far as might be, to answer them, would be the first and preliminary part of my undertaking.

As I proceeded, my task necessarily became more complicated; and to disentangle the primary truths on which alone our fellowship can be based, from these complications, I was led into fields of controversy I had hoped to have avoided; thereby considerably exceeding the limits I had set myself, and producing such a large amount of matter, that my Publishers considered it very unlikely that a work of such dimensions, published anonymously, would ever obtain me a hearing. I am convinced that their opinion is a sound one. I have therefore published rather less than one half of the original text; but should I succeed in gaining the attention of the Public sufficiently to justify me in doing so, I shall lose no time

in following up these introductory Papers with "The Teachings of the Sects."

As I have already observed, none of us are free from error, and most certainly, I claim no exemption from that rule. On the contrary, I am quite sure that in these pages, as in all my undertakings, I have made mistakes; and I can only pray that any such errors may be forgotten, and that the truth this book contains may remain in the minds of my readers, and in my own, to bring forth fruit to the Praise of His Name Who so compassionates the ignorant, and deals so tenderly with His erring children.

I feel more and more convinced that we should all hold as more precious than we have ever yet done, the Truths that unite us, endeavouring by God's grace to obtain a firmer grasp upon them. Far deeper researches into them are possible than any we have yet made, for these treasures are inexhaustible. To *make more* of the old Truths surrounding the most closely the Centre of our Faith, is a safer and a better course than prematurely to explore the Circumference. For these more distant researches may only be attempted with safety, or pursued with true success, by those

who have been thoroughly "rooted and grounded in *love*." It is this alone that will give understanding, and will keep in working order a genuine spiritual insight. (See Eph. iii. 17, 18; and Col. ii. 2.)

If by anything I can say in either of these volumes, I may be permitted, even in a single instance, to slacken the bondage of bitter prejudice by which so many Christians are kept apart from each other—or can impress one reader with a deep conviction of the futility of a merely notional Christianity, I shall have published them to some purpose.

I must now add, that should this book fall into the hands of either of the Writers from whom I have so largely quoted, I beg they will accept my apologies (I am sure on this score none are due to my readers) for having made such a free use of their remarks. I have done so because I was mainly anxious to press in the most forcible words that could be obtained, the truths I had to bring forward. I would also warmly thank them for the pleasure and profit I have derived from their books.

As I have been afraid of taking any premises for

granted; and as a right apprehension of what the Church is, is necessary to understanding the duties of the members of it, I have simply considered this question in the first chapter.

THE CHURCH.

“Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness leaning upon her Beloved?”—SONG OF SOLOMON VIII. 5.

IN the Song of Solomon is mystically set forth, as we may read at the top of the page in most bibles, “the mutual love of Christ and His Church.” The figure of the Bride is used in other places in Scripture, but here it is enlarged upon through the whole of this wondrous Song with all the poetry and high-colouring of Oriental imagery; and, in the last chapter of it, the question is asked by the supposed bystanders—“Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her Beloved?”

And this is a very important question. “*Who is this?*” this woman so beloved, and who speaks so rapturously of her Beloved, describing Him as the “Chiefest among ten thousand, and the Altogether Lovely?” and described by Him as being “all fair,”

and without "spot;" although of herself she says, in the beginning of the Song, that she is "black." Who is this? The answer would be given in the same words by nearly every commentator who has ever written on this passage, and they are the same that stand at the head of the page in our Bibles—*the Church*. But this word has been so misused, and applied so differently, that to some the answer really throws no light upon the subject; and they would ask another question—"But what, or who is the Church?"

And did they ask this of a Roman Catholic, he would tell them, "My own church, and no other. Outside her pale is no salvation, and she alone is the Church of Christ." Were they to turn to an English High Churchman of extreme views, asking the same question, he would reply, "The Catholic Church;" including in that term the Anglican, Roman, and Greek communions, but no others. The Established, and other Presbyterian churches of Scotland, and all the Dissenting bodies in England and America are outside his pale, together with all the Protestant churches on the Continent; and although he might admit that, *perhaps*, by the "uncovenanted mercies of God," or by virtue of their baptism, some members of these

might be saved, yet he would consider that he had no warrant for even such an admission as this, and would hardly think himself justified in teaching that there is any such possibility.

Certainly *these* are not the true answers to the question we are considering; nor is it even the so-called "visible Church," rightly described in the 19th Article of the Church of England in the following words: "The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men" (that is, of course, "faithful" as far as men are able to judge of each other), "in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the sacraments be duly ministered according to Christ's ordinance." Even this is not the Church of whose triumphal progress through the wilderness the Holy Ghost here speaks. But this visible Church contains the invisible; and it is the latter only that can in the highest and scriptural sense of the word, be called the Church.

If we read carefully every passage in the New Testament where the word "Church" occurs, we shall find—if we can by God's grace come to the study of His Word, trusting to Him alone to guide us, and to teach us by His Spirit; removing from our minds all pre-conceived ideas which we may have derived from the teachings of men—that there can be but one true

Church ; and that, clearly, and without any doubt, consists of all real believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, who have been saved by His Blood, from the Day of Pentecost to the present hour. "All who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." We shall find that these are also called "Christians," "saints," "the faithful," "the brethren," "faithful brethren," "those who believe," "beloved of God," "household of God," "household of faith," "habitation of God through the Spirit," and "sanctified in Christ Jesus." All these are synonymous terms, in so far as that they all describe the same people—viz., "the Church which God has purchased with His own Blood." This is the true Church, and no other. The members of it are gathered from all the different Christian communions, and united, in a bond which nothing can sever, by a living faith in the Son of God.

It is sometimes called, though not in Scripture, the "invisible Church," meaning that the members of it are exactly known only to God. *We* may sometimes make mistakes, being deceived by a religious profession, or the want of it, but God knows the heart, and each one who has ever truly come to Jesus, with however feeble a faith, as a lost sinner, to be forgiven and saved, is enrolled in His Book of Life. "In Thy

Book," says Christ in the Psalms, "are all My members written." This is reiterated in the Epistle to the Hebrews—"The Church of the First-born, whose names are written in Heaven." And in the book of Revelations we are solemnly told, that "Whosoever was not found written in the Book of Life, was cast into the lake of fire."

The Church of God was founded on the Day of Pentecost. "On this Rock," said our Lord to Peter (referring to his noble and divinely-taught confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God"), "on this Rock"—on *Himself*, that is—"I *will* build my Church." * He is still building it. Every sinner that is converted becomes a living stone in that Temple, Christ Himself being the Chief Corner-Stone. When the topmost stone is placed on the structure, that is, when God has "accomplished the number of His Elect," then will the voice of our Beloved be heard calling to His Bride, "Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away!" Then shall we be caught up to meet Him in the air, to be for ever with Him.

The word "Church," however, as applied to the

* Or, it may be, as many have said, on Peter himself, as the first of the "Apostles and Prophets" to preach the Gospel. (See Eph. ii. 20.)

outward organization of professing Christians, and including merely nominal as well as vital believers; cannot justly be said to be an unscriptural term, for we find it so applied in the Apocalyptic Epistles to the seven "churches." By that time the leaven of evil had so far spread in the Christian community, as to have brought the churches into the condition there described; the life of at least one of them having no longer any real existence except in name. And though in our own day the evil in the outward church is much increased, merely professing Christians having now hardly even "a name to live," still, the word "church" may be legitimately applied to any of the sections of Christendom, or to the whole of it, provided we carefully bear in mind that only in an external and secondary sense can the phrase be so accommodated.

But in this sense, all the Christian bodies, and unsectarian Christians also, constitute the "visible" church of Christ, and the various communities are rightly called sects, if by that is meant "sections" of the outward church into which all are admitted who profess to be Christians, and have been baptized as such; but this can save no one's soul. Into the true spiritual Church of Christ we can only be admitted by a personal faith in Him. We are baptized into His

Body, not by water, but by the Holy Ghost. Out of all the numerous sections of the visible church God is gathering a people to Himself, unto whom He gives Eternal Life, and who shall never perish; and, for God's sake, let us remember that it will avail us nothing to belong to any section of the outward church, if we are not members of that true Church, founded on a Rock, of which the Holy Ghost is the Ruler, and against which the gates of hell can never prevail.

If this is indeed our privilege—if we have attained through faith to the marvellous position of being a member of the Church of Christ—have we duly estimated where and how we stand as to our relationship to Himself? For this is not merely one of *friendship* as reconciled to God through the Blood of the Lamb. That was the position of the saints in the Old Testament dispensation, and exalted as it was, our own calling is a still higher one.

The blessings God has prepared for our race have been in an ascending scale. First Paradise; a happy and sinless state, but one where there was no knowledge of good and evil, and consequently no appreciation of the highest good. Moreover, it was altogether an earthly Paradise. Then from amongst sinners were gathered those who by faith in the revelation of

Himself that God was pleased to make before the Coming of His Son, were saved by the power of His Blood not yet shed. They were "redeemed from amongst men." These faithful ones, such as Abraham and Moses, were called even when on earth, the friends of God. John the Baptist, also claiming this standing for himself, does so in these words, "He that hath the Bride is the Bridegroom ; but the *friend of the Bridegroom*, who standeth and heareth Him, rejoiceth greatly because of the Bridegroom's voice : this *my* joy therefore is fulfilled." And the Lord says of him to the Jews, "Among those born of women, there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist ; but he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." Here it seems as if Christ could have meant by the Kingdom of Heaven, no other than that Church which He was to found after His Death, and of which the least member would be greater than the greatest prophet that had gone before. So that honourable and blessed as was the position of "Friend of God," a still more glorious destiny awaited the Bride of Christ.

And in the 5th chapter of Ephesians, we are told that the *marriage* relationship is a sacred one, because it sets forth in a figure the complete union which subsists between Christ and His Church. She is there

spoken of as being "without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but holy and without blemish." So, also, in the Song of Solomon is she described by her Beloved in the same strain, "Thou art all fair my love, there is no spot in thee." But we, conscious of our exceeding sinfulness, may well ask how this can be. It can only be in that by God we are regarded as perfectly cleansed by the Blood of Christ. Our sins are entirely forgiven and put away. "We are *complete in Him*." God reckons us to have indeed "died unto sin once," when His Son died upon the Cross; to have been buried when He was buried; to have risen when He rose; to have ascended when He ascended; and for a transcendent climax, to be even now in the Person of our "Forerunner" sitting in the Heavenlies whither He "is for us entered." Although still upon earth, yet "As He *is*, so are we in this world." Wondrous as is this thought, our God does indeed thus see his children: *In Christ*. And our Bridegroom in the Glory is anticipating with longing desire the hour when His Bride shall be taken up to meet Him, and to be for ever with Him. Finally, when every enemy shall have been destroyed, that glorious consummation of the felicity of Christ and His Blood-bought people will be entered upon, which in the close of Revelations

is described as the Wedding Supper of the Lamb. All these glories are before us as our own certain portion if we have been made partakers of Christ. They must be ours, because He is ours, and we are His. As a wife participates in her husband's possessions, and he becomes responsible for her debts, so Christ, as the Husband of the Church, having fully, to the uttermost farthing, paid her debts, takes her into such Union with Himself, that in Him she has a claim to His Inheritance, and shall live and reign with Him for ever.

This Love is, indeed, unfathomable! "He loved the Church, and gave Himself for it." Well may she exclaim with rapture, "This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend!"

Any one is able, if he will, by simply coming to Christ for it, to enter this blessed Community, and to enjoy its privileges. No more is needed. The Spirit and the Bride say to the sinner "Come."

It would be almost blasphemy, if it were not done so ignorantly, for any one section of the visible church to claim an exclusive right to this title. And this claim is made by those whose own right to be recognised even as a section of the visible church might more fairly be questioned, for we can hardly consider such to be in the words of the nineteenth

Article—"a congregation of *faithful* men in which the *pure word of God is preached*, and the sacraments be *duly* ministered."

The mystical Body of Christ, we must bear in mind, *is One*, although its members are scattered upon earth, and some may be found in such communions as those of the Roman and Eastern churches. Still the prayer of our Blessed Lord was surely answered, "that they all may be One even as We are One." Men are too apt to speak and write, and even pray, as if the *unity* He prayed for was *uniformity*. They ask God to make the Church One, by giving to the members of it clearer, and more harmonious views of truth. This would indeed be a great gain, but it would not, could not make the actual Oneness of Christ's Body more complete than it is. "There *is* One Body, and One Spirit, even as ye are called in One Hope of your calling; One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism, One God and Father of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in you all." Christians alas! often lose sight of this blessed truth, but in spite of the many roots of bitterness which have sprung up and troubled the Church in all ages, dividing it into different outward communions, still the Church remains but One Body, animated by One Spirit.

Surely it is better to recognise this fact, and to rejoice

in it, for it must have a tendency to heal our divisions, and stimulate our love to our fellow-Christians to remember that though we may quarrel, and our *communion* with each other be disturbed, our *union* both with each other and with our Head can never be broken. In Him we are, and ever must be One. If this were fully understood, and brotherly love to our fellow-Christians felt and acted on, our divisions into different communities would be hardly to be deplored ; indeed not to be deplored at all if the various Sections of the Church of God co-operated in their different spheres, being united by the bond which alone could render such co-operation possible—"the bond of peace." Then instead of varieties of forms and discipline being injurious to the health and prosperity of the Church, this "diversity of operations" in the various departments of labour might be valuable and beneficial : each sect supplying a distinctive and "necessary" manner of service "for the edifying of the Body of Christ : till we all come into the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

SCHISM.

THIS word, like the word "Church," has been so perverted and misapplied, that to many it presents the idea solely of a separation from that body of professing Christians known as the "Church of England;" whilst to others it conveys the thought of separation from the larger body described as the "Church of Rome," or as she calls herself "the Catholic Church." But it is of importance that the members of the Church of God should clearly see that Schism can only mean a division caused by some difference of opinion supposed to be of absolute importance, but not really so, or by some ill-feeling produced by other causes, between the lively members of Christ's body.

To understand this it is necessary to have a knowledge of the whole of the New Testament, and especially to make the 12th of 1 Corinthians our study, carefully and prayerfully. The Body here spoken of is the same as the "Spouse" of the Canticles, as the "Bride" of Revelations, as the "Wife" of Ephesians v. It is another figure setting forth the Church of

God, and shewing the union of that Church with her Lord more emphatically than even the other figures shewed it forth. The Church is presented as the Body of which Christ is the Head. In Ephesians i. 22, 23 we read that He is "the Head over all to the Church, which is His Body." In Colossians i. 18, that He is "the Head of the Body, the Church." But the Head as the source of sensation and of life, without which the body would be but a mutilated corpse; the Head, as the seat of wisdom and knowledge; the Head, as supplying the motive power to the members, actually gives its name to the whole body, in the 12th verse of this chapter,—and that Name is Christ. "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ" (see also Col. i. 24). Here imagery can no further go. The union is indeed complete! To be thus a member of Christ, it seems unnecessary to say, ensures everlasting safety. There can be no mutilation of His Body. "The Head cannot say to the feet (the lowest members of the body) I have no need of you." Each member is "necessary." These members are individual Christians, and God has set them in His Church with greatest wisdom and tenderest solicitude, having regard to the temperament and

constitution of each one of them, knowing exactly what they are fit for, and by what sort of work they can best glorify Him : giving to each of them such talents and gifts as pleased Him, and all by " the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will." The gifts here spoken of, were to a great extent, doubtless, miraculous, but this is no objection to the general applicability of the figure to the Church in the present day. That Church is no less one than at the day of Pentecost, though she may have suffered a loss of spiritual power.

In those early days another difference existed. Although Christians had already begun to follow human leaders, and even to call themselves after their names, still the total number of even professing Christians was small, and so far they had not actually divided themselves into different denominations. We see, however, the germ of this error denounced in the 1st and 3d chapter of 1 Corinthians, where S. Paul says, " I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you ; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto me of you my brethren, . . . that there are contentions among you. Now, this I say, that every one of

you saith, I am of Paul ; and I of Apollos ; and I of Cephas ; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? . . . I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. . . For ye are yet carnal : for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal and walk according to man? For while one saith I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, are ye not carnal?" Would that this indignant remonstrance had been heeded by the whole Church! then the painful divisions existing among Christians in the present day would never have disgraced the cause of Christ. "Is Christ divided?" Paul argues; and I repeat the question—"Is He divided?" Can He possibly be divided? The *brethren* may be divided one from another by quarrels, but the Church regarded as S. Paul regarded her—as *Christ*—can never be divided. The divisions are transitory disturbances; very sinful, very disgraceful, but utterly powerless to destroy the main union with the Head.

Now, in these days of innumerable divisions among Christians, what is the way to meet them, if as S. Paul we have the spirit of the peace-maker? Is it to argue with the members of each sect, attempting to

demonstrate where *their* heresy lies, and to prove the soundness of our own particular denomination? Is perpetual controversy the sure road to peace? Has it proved itself to be so during the last eighteen hundred years? Or is not S. Paul's argument after all *the* powerful one: "*Is Christ divided?*" And as we go on to show that He *cannot* be, that we are, and must be ever one in Him, let our conduct, our brotherly love, show forth this oneness; so that loving each other as brethren, we are more eager to find out and to prove the good in each other's opinions than the error. Which course would have the most healing tendency? We know perfectly well. We know how the principle of love acts in a family; between friends; between husband and wife. To be forever picking and carping at each other's faults, is not likely to be the way to make up quarrels. (See Prov. xvii. 14.) To love on in spite of unkindness, in spite of coldness, in spite of misunderstanding, this is the better way—and certainly is the Christ-like way. "Love covereth all sins;" and why not, I repeat, all errors? Of course, I do not mean such heresy as that alluded to by S. John in his Second Epistle, vers. 9, 10. Even a true Christian may fall into error which shall be sufficiently serious to make it necessary

to separate ourselves from him in worship. But that is an extreme case which, were the principle of love more acted upon, would seldom arise. To apply the extreme penalty of the Church's law—excommunication—to every deviation from what we ourselves conceive the Word of God, in less important points, is to make a mockery of all rule, and ends in our adopting, as a final appeal, not God's Word at all, but our own (perhaps ignorant) interpretation of it. It is the old story of "We saw one casting out devils in *Thy Name*, and he followeth not us : and we *forbad* him *because* he followeth *not us*." And this was said by men who themselves had just *failed* in their attempt to work this very miracle. Oh! let us treasure in our hearts our Blessed Master's answer, for so He still answers the sectaries and separatists of our own age : "*Forbid him not*, for there is no man can do a miracle in My Name, that can lightly speak evil of Me. For he that is not against us is on our part." It is not denied that the greatest of all miracles—the giving life to dead souls—is wrought through the instrumentality of many Christians from whom others turn away. Yes, even when God is specially blessing them with abundant success. But, forsooth, we must not bid them God speed, for they have committed the sin we have

pronounced unpardonable—they are not following *us!*

The advantage to ourselves of possessing a spirit of love would also be great. Many of us are so fully occupied in attempting to pull the “motes” out of each other’s eyes, that we positively want leisure to attend to the “beams” in our own; and so we go on, still ignorantly believing ourselves perfectly competent to perform the most delicate excommunicating operations on our brethren, not knowing, alas! that we ourselves are rapidly becoming blind: for “he that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.”

The present state of Christendom is indeed in many respects a terrible one, and one feels that any remedial efforts can only now be directed towards attempting to reunite in the bonds of a *common affection* the true people of God. On the mass of corrupt Christendom, God’s judgment must fall. It is clearly too late to avert that: just as it was too late for Israel

in Jeremiah's time to avert His judgment on them then; but all the more is it necessary that the true Christian Church should present itself to the world, in the face of such evil, as a compact body, evidently animated by one Spirit; so that this exhibition should, even in these latter days, be the means of drawing out many from the surrounding ruin to take refuge in the Ark, drawn by the irresistible power of Love; having been compelled to say, as was said by the heathen of old time, but which, alas! has long ceased to be visibly true: "Behold how these Christians love one another."

We must take it for granted that in the heart of every one renewed by the Holy Ghost, there is at the bottom, however rarely it may manifest itself, a true sentiment of love to the brethren. This is the grand test as to whether we are or are not the children of God. "Marvel not, my brethren, if the *world* hate you." Hatred from the world should be expected by the saints. Hatred is as much one of the fruits of our corrupt nature, as love to the brethren is a fruit of the Spirit, and is classed amongst "the works of the flesh," in Galatians, by Paul, who also in that truly fearful picture of unregenerate man, in his epistle to Titus, speaks of the unconverted as "living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another." But

amongst the children of the God of Love the reverse should be expected, and, without this sign, no one should consider himself as "passed from death to life," or should be so considered by others. John says, "We *know* that we have passed from death to life *because we love the brethren*." It is easy to talk of our love to God, "but he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" Some of the greatest persecutors of the Church of Christ have spoken and written rapturously of their love to Him. But this was a delusion, founded upon a mere sentimental admiration of an ideal, having no existence except in their own imagination, but which they called Christ. It is easy to form some such picture in our minds, and then to say we love Jesus; but this fancy is not love. There is so much poetry, not merely in the Bible, *that* was felt by Voltaire and many other infidels, but in the character of Christ, and in the Gospel scheme, that the imagination may be touched by it, and yet not the *heart*; the sentiments may be affected, and the feelings wrought upon and roused; but it is the *affections*, not the *feelings*, that must be engaged; and unless our love to Jesus can be shown in acts and words of love to real, commonplace, perhaps otherwise uninteresting

men and women, just because they belong to Him, and are with us members of His Body, it is a delusion.

Still, as I said before, we must believe that there is in the heart of every believer some love to the brethren, though not in the activity it ought to be. And it is to this foundation principle of love that we should appeal if we desire to promote true charity amongst our fellow Christians. I therefore take it for granted that we do love one another, and that we do desire to see greater apparent unity in the Christian Church. And, I ask, shall we be content with desiring it? or shall we not rather do all we can, however limited our powers may be, towards accomplishing it?

And this work must begin in our own hearts. Are we ourselves perfectly clear from the charge of Schism? Are we in perfect love and charity towards all our fellow Christians? and could we join any of them in worship on the common ground of the preciousness of Christ and of His Gospel? If not, is the hindrance to our doing so of sufficient importance to cause this barrier between us? This is a question that cannot lightly be answered, involving as it does, not only much personal feeling, but what to the true souls amongst us is infinitely dearer, the honour of God. We will endeavour to go into this subject in the next

chapter, but before doing so let us remember that the sin of Schism is no light sin. It is an attempt on the part of men (and of *Christians* very often, which makes the sin more heinous) to put asunder what God has joined together; and although He Himself tells us that this is impossible, it makes the attempt no less guilty. It is also an attempt (and in this case, alas! apparently a most successful one) to defeat the purpose which our Lord Himself in His prayer distinctly says He had in view in desiring the unity of His Body, "that the world may believe that thou hast sent Me." The world neither knows nor cares to enquire into the purposes of God; and cannot be impressed by the fact of the Church's Oneness as long as that Oneness is not outwardly exhibited, for it is only apprehended by faith, which is not possessed by the carnal mind. But what an overwhelming and irresistible testimony would be presented to the world if there was a manifest exhibition of the Church's Union! If we did, indeed, love one another in *act* as well as theory, and in the Power of that Union which is strength, presented an unbroken front to the ranks of the world, the flesh, and the devil, who can say what the results would be? or rather can we *not* say—for Jesus has surely told us—"the world *would* believe"

in Him. I believe it is this sin of Schism to which nearly all the apparent failure of Christianity may be traced, both at home and abroad. May we ourselves then be preserved from the guilt of causing any unnecessary breach between the people of God !

Separation from any outward Communion is not necessarily Schism, for there have been times in the Church's history when this became absolutely necessary. Times when a flood of error had so swamped some particular section of the visible church, that however pure it may have been at first, the time arrived when those who valued God's truth were called out of it by Himself, that they might not be partakers of its sins. It is the tendency of every denomination to degenerate, as the element of evil is always to be found in each human institution ; and this tendency is only counteracted by the Holy Ghost keeping alive in the hearts of the true Christians of such a body a predominant love of God and of His truth, thus lifting them above the contracting and degrading power of party spirit. It is thus that the Holy Ghost rules the Church, not one or two sections of it. He is the great Centripetal Force ever drawing us towards Christ, and therefore towards each other, whilst the carnal tendency in human nature, acted on by Satan, is ever

centrifugal, alienating our allegiance and our affections from the Head of the Church, and causing divisions amongst ourselves.

But we must bear in mind that the reasons which were at one time sufficiently great to justify a separation from any nominally Christian body, *may*, in process of time, cease to exist. The next generation may have repudiated the errors held by their fathers, or may have rescinded (virtually, if not in act) the laws enacted by them, so as to enable those conscientiously to return to the community, who before had been obliged to leave it; and wherever this is possible it should be done.

Then again, Schism does not consist in leaving any body of professing Christians and attaching ourselves to another, if, at the place of worship nominally representing our own sect, we find the Gospel ignored and error taught; whilst at the other the Gospel is faithfully preached, and God is evidently blessing His Word in a special manner. And whether the place of worship we forsake, or that which we join, is church, chapel, or meeting, is of no importance, comparatively speaking. Of course we have our own predilections, and our reasons for preferring the mode of worship of our own denomination; and we may have good

grounds for believing that the doctrines held by it are more sound generally, or in theory, than those held by others ; but if in the particular case of that denomination, as represented in the locality in which we have been obliged to fix our residence, this is reversed, we must suit our conduct with regard to the exigencies of the actual case ; remembering that the *first* consideration must always be, not the points of difference in external forms, or of Church government, which have separated us, but the grand truths which have united us, and to these we must, at any cost, be faithful. By so doing we are the very reverse of schismatics. But if we leave a church, or a chapel, or a meeting, which has been, and still is, the centre of spiritual life in a place, and where God's word is faithfully preached, and set up another, with a view to better suiting our own taste or theories on non-essential points, *this is Schism*. And it is no excuse to plead the "dullness" of the preacher, or the non-attractiveness of the services. We are far too apt to over-estimate intellectual ability or natural eloquence, forgetting that God has chosen to commit the "treasure" of the Gospel into "earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us." This restless sensationalism is one of the greatest evils of the present day. The most

popular preacher is not the one likely to be most blessed, as a general rule. A faithful preacher must expect his sermons to be sometimes unpalatable, even to his *converted* hearers. It *may* be just the unpalatable truths that they most need.

We want a more teachable spirit, not so ready to sit in judgment on those whom God has "set over" us, but earnestly desirous to learn from all, wherever we can do so, being "clothed with humility." And even if God has given us a deeper insight into His truth than our minister, this is no reason for forsaking him, but all the more reason for strengthening his hands by earnest prayer, and by putting the farther truth before him, if we can do so without impertinence. Above all, let us pray far more earnestly and faithfully than we have ever done for our ministers, and we shall find a greater blessing to our own souls than if in a spirit of lawlessness we cause fresh divisions amongst God's people.

We shall do well to remember that "he that soweth discord among brethren," is said to be "an abomination to the Lord." These are His own words, and surely they are strong ones !

COMMUNION.

IT has already been assumed that as Christians we do in some measure love one another. We may therefore go further, and assume also that we *desire* to be peacemakers. But how? is the next question. How make peace in such a mighty quarrel as has separated the members of God's family? It may be but little we can each do, but if each truly did that little, much would be done. This, at least, we can do, and God grant us grace to do it; we can obey His command, and "ENDEAVOUR to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." (Eph. iv. 3.) If everyone refused to fight there would be no battle. Not that, as soldiers of Christ, we can lay down our weapons—God forbid! But we can turn them against our common foes, and no longer against each other. It is plain enough that Satan's chief object must be to divert our attention from these, and to weaken our cause by sowing discord in the ranks of Christ's army. "We are not strangers to his devices," and therefore should not be ensnared by them.

Would that we might each be enabled to resolve in God's strength, to meet all our brethren in the name of our common Saviour; and at once, and for ever, drop our sectarian prejudices, in so far as they prevent this Communion. But, alas! it is one thing to *write* about dropping prejudices, and another thing to *drop them*. Of all things prejudices are the least easily dropped, especially as we advance in life. Still, we all agree that prejudice is a very great and strong evil, and also that it is usually accompanied by ignorance of what really are the views of our opponents. We feel this bitterly enough when we see and hear our own views misrepresented. Are we equally careful fully to understand and fairly to state the views of others? Does it rouse our indignation when we hear the opinions of those with whom we differ, not done justice to in an argument? Because clearly it ought to do. Why should we allow dishonesty as connected with their religious views, when we would scorn to countenance any injury to their property, although the latter may be less valuable to them than the former? Yes; and may we not ourselves be sometimes guilty of dishonesty in quoting Scripture to favour our own views, conscious that we are taking advantage of the ignorance of others; perhaps quoting half a passage,

and withholding such words as we know appear to favour the view to which we are opposed? It may be that we are so foolishly afraid that God will not preserve His own truth, that we dare not acknowledge what we do not understand; or it may be from shame of exposing our ignorance. These are unpleasant truths, but is it *certain* that *all* Christians have altogether "renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but, by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God?" Alas! for poor human nature, that we who have been renewed in the spirit of our minds, should yet need such cautions; but we do need them: and in our efforts as peacemakers, we must ever follow those blessed precepts—"Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." "Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves." "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."

But taking heed to these injunctions, what is it that we should do, or abstain from doing, in order to promote, as far as in us lies, the spirit of love in the

Christian Church? To me it certainly appears most clearly that we should treat all our fellow Christians as brethren, by *showing* that we worship the same God in the name of the same Saviour, and in the energy of the same Spirit, by uniting with them whenever an occasion offers in acts of worship. Of course we cannot expect to see all denominational barriers swept away, nor would these be any evil of importance if, in spite of them, the bond of a common Church fellowship were acknowledged and maintained. We should each strive to be "unsectarian," not by refusing to join our denominational brethren, but by joining them all wherever and whenever we can do so without compromising an iota of essential truth.

And here, no doubt, a most difficult and entangled question is involved. What *is* "essential truth," and what are its boundaries? Yet I think these questions might be confidently answered, and without presumption; but to do so we must return in spirit to the original simplicity of the Gospel of Christ, and ask another question—"What is the bond that unites us?" Is it not a common faith in the Atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ; and does not all essential truth cluster round this doctrine *necessarily* if it is held in its fulness? The term "essential truth," no doubt, requires ex-

planation, for it may well be asked, "essential to *what?*" In one sense no truth can be *non-essential*, for "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable." To hold the full sphere of truth completely balanced in all its parts is essential to "the man of God," being "*perfect and thoroughly* furnished unto all good works;" but I speak here of what is essential to inter-communion only. We all hold *some* error doubtless, for our knowledge is incomplete. Therefore the apprehension of *all* truth is not essential to our Christian communion, or none of us could ever enjoy it. We make the same distinction with regard to sins. We are all sinners; but deliberate and indulged sin should exclude a man from the Lord's Table. Heresy on some points must rank as wilful sin; we could not so class every error, it would be preposterous.

It is absolutely necessary that worship should be glorifying to the God to whom it is addressed. Therefore, none who are dishonouring God by holding false doctrine on any vital point, can be true worshippers: for only such worship as emanates from the Holy Ghost Himself, in the hearts of His people, can be acceptable to Him "who searcheth the hearts, and knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit." If the Spirit is grieved, as He must be by those who are ensnared into heresy,

He cannot thus fulfil His Office in them ; and as long as they persist in following these “pernicious ways” they cannot truly cry even “Abba Father !” I am assuming such persons to have been truly children of God, but of this their fellow creatures can have no cognizance : by their contempt of Truth they have forfeited their place in the “household of faith,” and unless they repent, must be treated as being *outside* the blessing (see Matt. xviii. 17). I know that this passage is connected by its context with personal injury done to a brother, but I believe it was intended to be enforced quite as strictly in case of divergence from the orthodox faith in essential doctrine.—Titus iii. 10 ; 2 John 9-11 ; 1 Tim. i. 19, 20 ; 2 Tim. i. 13, ii. 16-21 ; Rev. ii. 2, 6, 14-16, 20-25.

These passages shew how zealously the Church was to be protected from error ; but the special errors alluded to are such as we can no longer specify, excepting that in the 2nd Epistle of John, which the 7th verse shows to have been Gnosticism, or “not confessing that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh.” The error of Hymenæus and Alexander, whatever especial form it may have assumed, was “blasphemy ;” whilst the “Nicolaitanes,” so strongly condemned in Revelations, were supposed to be Antinomians.

These heresies then, from which the early Christians

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were to separate themselves, were most pestilent ones. Such heresies as were utterly incompatible with true Christianity in any form. And although in our days the errors of Christendom may have changed their form, there are, no doubt, still heresies held by some of the Christian bodies, which would make it entirely impossible for any having at heart the glory of God and the honour of Christ, to join even once in an act of worship, those who hold them; for such an act would not be one of *worship*, rather one of connivance at what is distinctly dishonouring to God. And it is here that we are called to "try things that differ." (Phil. i. 10, marg.) We are "not to believe every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God:" and this is part of our controversy with Rome. S. Paul prayed for "all the saints at Philippi," as well as for "the bishops and deacons," that they might be filled with this spirit of "judgment," which is no other than that Unction by which even the "little children" when they trusted to the teaching of the Holy Ghost "knew all things" by bringing to His judgment every difficulty necessary for them to understand as it arose. This same Unction is ours if we seek it, ceasing from man, and placing implicit confidence in Him who is especially present in this Dispensation to "guide"

Christians "into all truth." Thus our appeal is not, as the Roman Catholics would say, to our "private judgment"—God forbid! but to the One unfailing Source of all Truth; and exactly in so far as individual Christians, or Christian communities have been content to trust to His own personal Rule and Guidance, have they attained to a knowledge of truth. The Office of Ruler of the Church was not vacant when Christ left this earth (for as the Roman Catholics rightly argue, He was not likely to leave His place unsupplied), nor was it filled by Peter; but God the Holy Ghost Himself, came down to dwell amongst us, with us, and *in* us, making His Church "an Habitation of God through the Spirit." We have then abiding in us (for He has never been withdrawn) One Who is sufficient for our discerning of such error as is gross enough to necessitate our separation from those who hold it. But have we truly relied on *His* teaching? Have we not rather often received our impressions of the soundness or unsoundness of the tenets of others from the teaching of men, and retained them without farther inquiry, not judging them prayerfully by the Word? And thus, may we not have done an unintentional, no doubt, but still a real injury to some of our brethren and to ourselves? For if we have unnecessarily separated

ourselves from any Christians, and remain in this state of alienation, we are not walking in love or in light, and cannot therefore, enjoy a full blessing in our own souls. We are dishonouring Him Who has formed us into One Body, and this, even though we are actuated by zeal for His truth, as we suppose. There are then evils on either hand to be guarded against; complicity in any error derogatory to God's glory; and needless division amongst the brethren.

And now, I would ask, with all regard to the importance and to the apparent intricacy of the subject, do we really see distinctly, after earnest prayer for the Spirit's guidance, and implicit faith in that guidance, the marks of the antichrist in the creed held by the Christians from whom we keep aloof? Can we honestly compare their errors (or what we imagine their errors) with those inveighed against in the passages before quoted, or any others describing "damnable errors" in the New Testament? Is there any heresy taught in the Prayer Book of the Church of England, or held as doctrine by any of the Presbyterian bodies, the Wesleyan, Primitive, or other Methodists; or by the Independents, or the Baptists, or the Moravians, or the Brethren (of either kind) that could the least compare with such as the Apostles commended separa-

tion from? We have no single instance of any censure being expressed in Apostolic times, for divergence of opinion on any sacramental questions, except, of course, the gross instance (which cannot be connected with "opinion") of those in the Corinthian church, who returning towards the revolting heathenism out of which they had been brought, would have turned the Supper of the Lord into a drunken feast. Do any of our Church of England or dissenting brethren do anything the least like this now? Have we not perhaps exaggerated the errors of many of our fellow Christians? God knows we have all been blameable, and there has been much in the past that may account only too easily for the bitterness which has so long subsisted between us. But what does it matter now whose fault first made the chief quarrel? Mutual recriminations are alike childish and unchristian. If the dissenters were forced out of the Church of England (which no doubt they were), does that excuse the subdivisions amongst them in the present day? And has there not been amongst all parties so much of party spirit and unchristlike temper, that not one is in a position to throw a stone at the rest. Take any sectarian newspaper, and what is the tone of it? Eminently unchristian. I do not wish to give needless

pain or offence, so refrain from naming any one ; but I have been much struck lately, having had an opportunity of seeing many such, by the shockingly unspiritual tone of all ; and the exact *similarity* between them in style and spirit, though, of course, representing the very opposite poles of thought. Whether Roman Catholic or dissenting, or many of the shades between, there was the same flippancy, and bitterness, and unfairness ; as well as an entire absence of spirituality ; with at least the exception of the one Methodist paper which was amongst them. And this cannot surprise us, as a Christlike spirit and the spirit of separatism cannot dwell together. There are periodicals however, (mostly *unsectarian*) which are a delightful contrast to these, and are some of the signs of better days, for which we thank God.

But that we should speak kindly of each other, aye, and *feel* kindly, delightful as this would be, is not all I trust, we may attain to. As I said before, we should *show* our love by joining each other at least occasionally in acts of worship. Whilst saying this, I am fully aware that for the maintenance of order and discipline, and the profit of our own souls, it is far better to attend, *where it is possible to do so*, regularly at the same place of worship, attaching ourselves to one

congregation, under one pastor, and not with the "itching ears" of the latter days, to be "heaping to ourselves teachers," and restlessly wandering from church to church, or from meeting to meeting. But the Catholic spirit should exist, and should be cultivated, which would gladly, on any particular occasion, meet all our brethren in worship, including the Central Point of Christian worship, the Blessed Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. And what hinders this? *Not heresy* in the case of any of the bodies I have specified. There may be individual heretics amongst them in spite of the safeguards of creeds and articles and confessions of faith; and there are, of course. And if a minister is aware that one professing to be a Christian holds anything contrary to sound doctrine (I use the words in the large and important sense put upon them by S. Paul in 1 Tim. i. 10 and vi. 3, and in the passages previously quoted), or saying he holds the true faith, is living in known sin, he is bound, if he would be faithful to his Master, and would not grieve the Holy Spirit, to put away such a person from Christian Communion. But, as *bodies*, they *are* sound in the faith, all of them, in those great and central points which alone it is necessary to our inter-communion for us to agree upon. There may be much

ignorance amongst Christ's lambs. Who has not heard many a true-hearted, but uneducated Christian blunder in and out of half-a-dozen heresies in as many minutes, partly from ignorance, partly from want of ability to express himself! Yes, and to some extent, from the same want of apprehension, he may be opinionated, and more or less perverse. Is he therefore to be cut off from the privileges to which as a child in God's family he has a claim? His ignorance, nay his perversity, is not to be treated as a crime (our heavenly Father has not thus dealt with us!). Rather should such a one be led on gently, and in the spirit of the Good Shepherd, to the greener pastures and deeper waters of the Word of Life.

Do we not require to return to the first simplicity and freshness of the faith? "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," was the marrow of the old Gospel; and must have been nearly all the instruction received by the Philippian jailer before he was outwardly admitted into the Christian Church by baptism. Neither was any more elaborate confession of faith demanded of the Ethiopian than "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." We are certainly not *told* that they were received at once into Christian fellowship by the breaking of bread, but surely we

cannot believe they would have been rejected by the apostles had they presented themselves the next day for that purpose? The "babes in Christ" are as much children of God as the "fathers," and the Table of the Lord should be the gathering point of the whole family. Many are rejected by an exclusive communion of the present day, because they have not denounced heresies of which they have never heard, and which they would be equally incapable of judging, and incompetent to condemn. But the Lord's Table is not the meeting place of advanced theologians, but of the children of God who have not forfeited their place at it by deliberate sin.

"For the love of God is broader
Than the measures of man's mind ;
And the heart of the Eternal
Is most wonderfully kind.

But men make His love too narrow,
By false limits of their own,
And they magnify His strictness
With a zeal He will not own.

If our love were but more simple,
We should take Him at his word,
And our lives would be all sunshine
From the sweetness of our Lord."

—*Faber.*

Strange, indeed, that such words should have been written by one whose own creed is so strongly condemned by them !

But whilst on the one hand, some Christians will not receive any into their communion, who do not appreciate, or at any rate consent to all the subtleties of doctrine, no doubt in the main, thoroughly sound doctrine, but such as requires a great deal of sheer cleverness to master ; on the other hand, we have Christians who will not even join their brethren outside the "Church of England," in any act of worship, because of a superstitious belief that this body stands altogether on a different footing from any other, and is in some mysterious way, the direct, and only successor to the Church of Apostolic days. I feel that to enter into this part of the subject we must plunge into a sea of men-made difficulties, from which I instinctively shrink ; but it may be truly said of religions, as Bishop Berkeley said of scientific difficulties, "Upon the whole I am inclined to think that the far greater part, if not all, of those difficulties which have hitherto amused philosophers, and blocked up the way to knowledge, are entirely owing to ourselves. That we have first raised a dust and then complain we cannot see."

APOSTOLICAL SUCCESSION.

THE theory that goes by this name is usually the accompaniment of an apprehension of truth (though no doubt distorted) that has been lost sight of by the mass of Protestants. The knowledge namely, that the Church of God has, and necessarily always has had, a distinct, corporate, historical existence. Moreover that to this body corporate has been originally granted Authority and Powers which cannot without a wresting of the Scriptures be explained away. Furthermore, that the Mission and Jurisdiction to which the Church owes her true standing, can only be derived from a spiritual source. These are truths of great magnitude, and the instinctive recognition of them has developed the teaching which we must now consider.

The theory of "Apostolic Succession," however, is a weak and fictitious substitute for the "missing link." That the link is missing I would not deny. And that the Church no longer acts with Divine Authority in matters of Discipline, no theories, one way or the other, can disprove. But no scheme based upon a con-

fusion of the true, with the merely visible Church, can avail to compensate for the loss of spiritual power she has sustained ; nor even to point out the cause of this loss. And this confusion is made by all upholders of Apostolical Succession.

On the other hand neither can a full recognition of this distinction, together with an endeavour to return to the purity of doctrine, and spirituality of worship of Apostolic days, revive the Church's original claim still lying in abeyance, so long as such an attempt is made on the exclusive principle of the "Brethren." Into this part of the subject I must enter more at length in the "Conclusion ;" but must now confine myself to what appears to me an external representation—I might almost say a mechanical imitation of "Church truth."

I know that to satisfy many morbidly scrupulous minds on the subject of the peculiar claims made by some of the clergy, it would be necessary to go deeper into the facts of Church History, as well as into the teaching of Holy Scripture (which, alas ! is no longer held *sufficient* by many who yet subscribe to the 6th Article of the Church of England) than my space will allow, for these controversies are what I most wish to avoid where it is possible to do so.

But surely the fact that the religion of Jesus Christ

is meant for all sinners, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, men, women, and children, might convince us that its ordinances may be enjoyed without any such knowledge. The supposition to the contrary is really grotesque in its folly. No one would be able under that supposition* to enjoy Church membership who had not gone through an arduous course of reading in Ecclesiastical history, to understand which he must be a generally well educated man. Or, he must assent to teaching (as I have lately shewn), of the merits of which it is impossible he can judge. His only motive for this would be a lazy indifference to truth, or a blind obedience to what he is convinced is authority set over him by God.† But how can he be convinced of that without the previous training of which I have been

* This is supposing the "Church" theory were carried out, as it would be had the ecclesiastics the power they possess in the Roman Communion, or in the Episcopal body in Scotland. We all know how the Sacrament was refused to the Duke of Argyle by one of the Scotch bishops. In England, I imagine that at present, anyone, however frequently joining dissenters, may communicate in any church; but this is from the inability of the High Church clergy in this country to act upon the true "Church" principle, which is strictly exclusive.

† So that whether an ignorant high churchman or an ignorant "exclusive," he recognizes the authority of an infallible Church.

speaking? I know how well it sounds, this theory of humble faith and unquestioning obedience to a spiritual power ; but, as God has given to all responsible beings that most precious of all His natural gifts, reason, it is no presumption, quite the contrary, to enquire of our fellow men, before obeying them, Where are your credentials, and who gave you this authority? The Jews were perfectly justified in asking this question of Christ, when they asked it honestly ; and He answered it, not by word only but by deed, "the works that I do bear witness of Me, that the Father hath sent Me." So did the Apostles. Do the ecclesiastical guides of the present day give these proofs of their Apostleship? Besides, the clergy contradict each other—which of them are we to believe?

But, it is argued, what they *say* is not the point. It is a question of whether or not powers are divinely conferred upon them, by which they can forgive sins (on behalf of God), and work miracles in their sacramental acts, which miracles are generally necessary to salvation. I do not think the word "miracle" is too strong a one, but I will gladly modify it if it at all misrepresents the view held by the sacerdotalists. The subject of the nature of the Sacraments will be considered in the next chapter. In this, therefore, it will

not be necessary to enter into that question, but merely briefly to examine the claim to a special authority derived directly from the Apostles, unshared by the ministers of other denominations, which is made by a large number of the clergy of the Church of England, thereby causing a schism in the Church of God.

This is the theory of so-called Apostolic Succession, which, according to those who hold it, "means that all men who have a right to be considered ministers of Christ have received from Him a commission to minister in His name, conveyed in an outward and visible manner in a direct line from the Holy Apostles." And this commission is supposed to be transmitted alone through "bishops." "So that there can be no true Christian ministry, no true church, and no validity in the sacraments, except where there are ministers duly ordained by bishops who have received their episcopal authority and power by this uninterrupted transmission from the Apostles. All others, therefore, who minister in any congregation, are regarded as usurpers, schismatics, or heretics—intruding into an office which is not theirs—the Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, of modern days—without lawful authority, powerless of all good, and constituting, with their people, a band of revolvers from Christ, instead of a branch of His Church."

This, at least, is the theory carried to its legitimate conclusion, and yet amongst the High Church clergy who make these claims, there are those whose own spirit is too Christ-like to allow of them going thus far. Indeed I have heard of one of them admitting, contrary to all the rules of logic, that he "often feared that the lambs were outside the fold, and the wolves within!" And another even called the various dissenting bodies a part of the Church—thus giving up the point.

The whole theory of Apostolic Succession is founded upon the sacerdotal claims of the clergy. Were they content with being Christian *ministers*, they would never put it forward. But they claim to be priests, and glory in the name, quoting their own prayer-book as their authority for it. The New Testament they could not quote, as the only passages where the word occurs refer to the Levitical priesthood, or to the High Priesthood of Christ, and of Melchizedek, and to the priesthood of believers generally (1 Peter ii. 5, 9; Rev i. 6).

Nor does the Prayer Book support them there, for as any one may see who reads the rubric, the words minister and priest are convertible terms, and are used to designate the same person on the same occasion. The reason of this is obvious. The word "priest," as

used in the Prayer Book, had no sacerdotal signification. It has a different derivation from the word as applied in Scripture to the Levitical priesthood. It is simply a corruption of "presbyter," which became "prester" and then "priest."

A priest, in the Scriptural sense of the word, means one who has been chosen out to offer sacrifices. Not in any wise as a teacher. He might or might not have had these gifts; but the office of teacher was an entirely distinct one, and was confined to no particular order of men. Jesus Christ having in His own Person exhaustively fulfilled all the requirements of the Ceremonial law, which were worth nothing except in so far as they foreshadowed Him, there can be no priesthood on earth, for beside spiritual sacrifices there are none to offer, and to offer these is the privilege of every Christian. In that sense we are all priests. Christ's were no empty words when He emphatically declared, with His dying breath that "It is finished!" And any who teach that any more propitiatory sacrifices are required, are pouring contempt upon "His One oblation of Himself once offered—a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world."

Nothing more is needed, nothing more required for

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our complete acceptance and reconciliation with God than our participation in this One Sacrifice by a *personal trust in It*.

"The succession of the Jewish priests was distinctly laid down by divine authority from the beginning; and reiterated commands, enforced by the severest judgments, emphatically declared, that no one who was not of the seed of Aaron might officiate at the altar of God. . . . But in the Christian dispensation no such command was ever given, nor is there in the New Testament the slightest intimation, much less an authoritative announcement, that such an apostolic succession is the only source of lawful ministerial authority. The subject, in fact, is not mentioned or alluded to in the Christian Scriptures; nor are the Apostles ever shewn to have themselves received, or to have given to others, any such powers as this dogma asserts to have been transmitted."

Now this forms an absolutely conclusive refutation of the theory. We know with what exactness the right succession of priests was ordained in the Old Testament, and with what strictness it was maintained. After a time of laxity, when the Israelites had been neglecting the commands of God, He made a public exhibition of His righteous anger by slaying Uzzah for merely

touching the Ark, he not being of the family of Kohath, the divinely appointed Porters. The slightest disregard of some of the ritual observances was by the Law punishable by death. It must be considered impossible that the same God when organizing a new dispensation, should not have equally secured the due succession of priesthood, had a priesthood been contemplated by Him as part of its machinery. That He should have intended this succession, and yet have laid down no laws respecting its maintenance, is a preposterous supposition.

Neither is there any Scriptural authority for the order of bishops as an order distinct from the presbytery. The word *episkopos* only occurs five times in the new Testament. Four times it is translated "bishop," and once "overseer." The word *episkopē* occurs twice—viz., in 1 Tim. iii. 1, and Acts i. 20. We will consider each of the five occurrences of the word in its simplest form. 1st, Phil. i. 1. Here S. Paul addresses his epistle to "all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons." We know that the Apostles had ordained *elders* in every church, why are these therefore omitted? Obviously they could not have been, but the words elder and bishop must have been synonymous terms.

2ndly, 1 Tim. iii. 2. The character and conduct of a bishop is here insisted upon; and this is followed by similar injunctions regarding the *deacons*. Again where are the elders? Evidently in this case also "bishop" was but another name for an elder. 3rdly, Titus i. 7. Here a bishop is clearly shewn to be an elder. Compare with verse 5. 4thly, 1 Peter ii. 25. This being applied to Christ proves nothing. 5thly, Acts xx. 28. If we compare this with verse 17 we shall have the final proof that *episkopos* (bishop or overseer) and *presbuteros* (elder) describe the same rank in the ministry.

An elder then is sometimes called *episkopos*, or *overseer*, from his "taking an oversight" of his congregation; the word being one well known in classical Greek. It signified in particular the civil officer sent by the Athenians to exercise a superintending authority in cities of their "subject-allies." In process of time it became expedient that authority should be conferred upon one elder for the general supervision of the rest. Thus "Timothy at Ephesus, and Titus in Crete, were delegated by S. Paul to perform for him what we might call episcopal functions—in ordaining, superintending, reproofing, or encouraging the ministers of those churches, as well as endeavouring to promote

the general well-being of the Christian communities there. But they are never called 'bishops,' or any other name which might indicate a special order or ecclesiastical office. Their commission was evidently an exceptional and temporary charge, to meet some peculiar wants in those places during the necessary absence of S. Paul; and there is no intimation of any kind that such appointments were of general necessity—no intimation that they were needed; or that they were made, or ought to be made, in any other churches of the time. Nevertheless the authority thus delegated to Timothy and Titus may justly be considered the embryo of the episcopacy of the following age, or the pattern which the churches probably followed when it was found desirable to establish an order superior to that of the presbyters."

Thus although presbyters and deacons were the only orders of ministry established in the Apostolic days, it was quite justifiable, and no doubt very advantageous for the maintenance of order and discipline in the church, to make one of the elders responsible for a number of the rest, and so become an overseer among the overseers. And for this arrangement there was a Scriptural precedent in the cases of Timothy and Titus.

Two of the earliest fathers, Clement and Polycarp, make no more reference to bishops as an ecclesiastical order distinct from presbyters than the Apostles do.

Before the date of the latter's Epistle to the Philippians however, there were already several Asiatic bishoprics, as is proved from the Epistles of Ignatius. But later again than either, Justin Martyr once more ignores the episcopacy. From this we may learn that some of the Churches were much later than others in adopting this form of government.

With this absence of proof of its universal existence in the earlier period of the Church's history—nay, with what may fairly be considered as proof to the contrary—and still more with the silence of the New Testament on the subject—the whole theory of Apostolic succession falls to the ground. From the end of the second century the flood of superstition so soon to overrun the Church began to set in; and very soon, certainly before the end of the fourth century, there was hardly an error of any importance,—of such as are now commonly supposed to be characteristic of Romanism—that had not already corrupted it.

The quotations I have made are from a most interesting book, which I cordially recommend to any of my readers who may wish to be acquainted with the

origin of the ecclesiastical scruples which have caused such needless dissention and divisions amongst Christians—"The Ecclesiastical Polity of the New Testament," by the Rev. G. A. Jacob, D.D., late Head Master of Christ's Hospital. It is published by Isbister & Co. There they will find the question fully and unanswerably stated by one thoroughly informed on Church History, and there they will find a concise account of what the Nicene church of which we hear so much, really was; if at least they are unable to satisfy themselves on this score from the Patristic writings themselves. The sacerdotalists of the present day make no secret of their desire to bring us back to that age which they consider golden, and of which so few who yet have believed this teaching really know anything. It is a subject that repays investigation, strange and sad though it be. For here we find these grand old "fathers" of the church, so firmly grasping the Cross of Christ, persecuted and martyred for the faith; and yet themselves overlaying it with the most miserable superstitions. Nor can we wonder at it. When once they left their simple dependence upon the Rule and Guidance of the Holy Ghost, and followed human leaders, what could preserve them from the lapse which succeeded? They lived in days

when civilisation was in its infancy, and when the ignorance, and therefore the credulity of the whole human race was most gross. They were surrounded by heathens whom it was a continual temptation to them to conciliate. Judaism, being no longer formidable as an enemy attacking them from *without*, had become far more dangerous as an evil influence *within* the Christian body. We see the beginning of this plainly enough in the Epistle to the Galatians, to cause us no surprise at its development two centuries later into a Christianity much of it merely nominal, and all of it deeply tainted with heathen errors, and complicated with Jewish practices.

Their ministers now wished to imitate the Jewish order of priesthood. Their churches, at a later period, were "divided into two—and later still into three—parts, which the ecclesiastical system in its progressive development required for carrying out its principles. For when, during the third century, the tide of sacerdotalism had set in, and Christian presbyters were looked upon as *priests*, who had a *sacrifice* to offer upon an *altar*; this imitation of the Jewish temple naturally followed." "The three divisions, when adopted in churches, were these—1. The ante-temple, where penitents and catechumens stood, and to which

heathens were admitted. 2. The temple, where the 'faithful,' or communicants, were placed." This was called the *ναὸς*, afterwards latinized into *navis*, whence the English word *nave*. "3. The sanctuary, where the 'altar' was placed. It was also called *ἄγιον*, *ιεράριον*, *θυσιαστήριον*; or in Latin, *sanctuarium*, *sacrum*, *sancta sanctorum*, the Holy of Holies. It was separated by rails or latticework—*cancelli*; whence the modern name 'chancel.' The entrance to this was closed by gates or curtains, 'partly to hide the prospect of this part of the church from the catechumens and unbelievers, and partly to cover the sacrifice of the Eucharist in the time of consecration.'

"Thus both the Jewish notion of a temple which none but priests might enter, and the heathen notion of sacred mysteries hidden from the uninitiated, were encouraged in the church. None of these things have the least countenance in the Church system of the New Testament." Incense, lighted lamps in the day time, crosses, flowers, pictures, images, and statues, soon followed—so did the doctrine of transubstantiation, and the adoration of the host. "But this was not the worst, the consecrated elements were 'reserved,' and used for purposes of the grossest superstition. A piece of the consecrated bread put into the mouth of

the dying was a sure *viaticum*, or safe passport for the soul. . . . It was only going a little beyond this, when people gave this sacrament to the *dead*. This was forbidden by the Council of Carthage (A.D. 397); and Chrysostom spoke against it, but the 'orthodox' practice gave occasion for it. Cyprian mentions with satisfaction that a woman who kept 'the Lord's Sacrament,' in a box for her daily use, joined in some idol-worship, whereupon, when she attempted afterwards to open the box, a fire burst out from it with such fury that she did not dare to touch it again." These kind of stories *abound*. "Thus Ambrose, in a solemn oration on the death of his brother Satyrus, triumphantly relates that Satyrus being shipwrecked in a storm at sea, had a piece of 'the divine sacrament' *tied round his neck* in a priest's scarf, and having thus cast himself into the waves was thereby preserved, without needing so much as a plank to support him."

Prayers and offerings for the dead are first mentioned by Tertullian, but afterwards became the common practice. Pardon of sin, and justification by almsgiving and other good works were taught. Cyprian wrote a treatise on this subject in which he supports his assertions with quotations from the Apocrypha,

that "any kind of sin after baptism is washed away by almsgiving." Chrysostom also, in spite of having made the clearest possible Gospel statements of salvation by faith only (see the Homily on "Good Works"), actually says the same thing. Intercession of saints, and prayers to them was now usual. But the actual worship of the blessed Virgin, does not appear to have been *prevalent* till after the end of the fourth century, but it *began* before that date. And so forth. I will not continue the melancholy category of errors and superstitions, which however included the most preposterous miracles *to any amount*, and the most miserable puerilities of every kind.

It is to these things we are invited to return, by men whose theory of Apostolic Succession is causing many a deluded but true child of God to commit the sin of schism.

Milner thus closes his history of the Church History of the second century :—"And here we close the view of the second century, which for the most part exhibited proofs of divine grace as strong, or nearly so, as the first. We have seen the same simple and unshaken faith of Jesus, the same love of God and of the brethren ; and,—that in which they singularly excelled modern Christians,—the same heavenly spirit and

victory over the world. But a dark shade is enveloping these divine glories. The Spirit of God is grieved already by the ambitious intrusions of self-righteousness, argumentative refinements, and Pharisaic pride ; and though it be more common to represent the most sensible decay of godliness as commencing a century later, to me it seems already begun."

The ecclesiastical spirit thus beginning to be displayed, afterwards, when favoured by prosperity grew to the most frightful dimensions, and became the great hindrance, not only to the spread of the Gospel, but to the civilization of Europe. It was not until the Reformation had caused it to slacken its hold upon England and Germany ; and scepticism, the sure successor of ages of superstition, had prepared the way to scientific enquiry in France, by turning the attention of the greater intellects of the day in that direction rather than towards theological controversy, that Europe was able at all to recover itself from its debasing bondage. In our own days whilst the ecclesiastical power is rapidly losing its ground in what has till now been its stronghold, it actually appears to be having a revival in England, and has already enslaved numbers of ignorant Christians. Although Infidelity is of course in itself a greater evil, yet from it, I think Christianity

has not so much to fear. The advancement of all true Science must ever be in her favour. "Science, falsely so called," has not so far proved itself a very dangerous enemy to the Church herself, though alas ! it is a powerful weapon in Satan's hand towards keeping sinners from taking refuge within her shelter. This is ever an "opposition" to the Truth. But the traitor *in* the camp is to be the most dreaded. And does not the melancholy history of the Early Church teach us this lesson? May we take it to heart ! Infidelity may, and will, I have no doubt, arise as a persecuting power personified in the Antichrist ; but the gradual eating out of the life of the Church by superstition and priest-craft may prove a more deadly because a more insidious evil.

Many of the saints have accepted this teaching merely because they have been told that the authority of the early church was binding on them, and that "the unanimous consent of the fathers" is in favour of it. This they have never attempted perhaps to verify for themselves, or they would have found it to be a myth. But they have been led to receive the teaching of those similarly instructed, or whose class-prejudices inclined them, as it did many of their authorities, to adopt these views. And this cannot surprise us. The

same feeling has led the majority of the clergy in all ages to be opposed to any spirit of enquiry among the laity, as not only offensive to their prejudices, but detrimental to their power. And this, merely because in common with all human beings they have a heart prone to evil, and one evil in their particular case, is very naturally a tendency to be unduly in favour of a condition of things which exalts themselves. We see this tendency even in the Apostles themselves before the Day of Pentecost.

One man singularly free from it, if we can judge by his writings, was Archbishop Whately. His "Cautions for the Times" ought to be read by all who have been unsettled by sacerdotal teaching. In his paper on "Apostolic Succession" he says—"Now when a man is taught this he cannot have any reasonable assurance without *proof* that the Ministers under whom he has been placed really do possess this Apostolic Succession. . . . That the 'Apostles ordained elders in every city;' and that there is every reason to believe (which is quite true) that these ordained others, and so on, &c., . . . would be very satisfactory *if* proof could be added that no instance of irregularity in this transmission of Orders could ever have taken place in any individual instance; or that the particular Minister

about whom he is anxiously enquiring, can fully establish, in his own case, an unbroken chain.

“ But, in default of such proof, our unhappy enquirer must be content with the assurance that it is *very probable* his own Minister is a regular and real one, and that therefore those placed under his ministry are *most likely* members of the church of Christ; and are probably partaking of real Sacraments, and not invalid and empty appearances! But of all this they can have no reasonable certainty.

“ And yet nothing short of such certainty ever satisfies reasonable men, in any matter that they have really at heart. If, for example, you were to go into a chemist's shop for some important medicine, on which might turn the life or death of some dear friend, you would not be satisfied at being told that the bottle he presented to you was one out of fifty, all of which, *perhaps*,—or, at least, forty-eight or forty-nine of them,—contained the right medicine, though it certainly was possible the fiftieth might contain poison; but he *hoped* you had got one of the right bottles.

“ Or, again, if you should claim a share in some property, alleging that the former owner of that property undoubtedly *had* several relatives, and that it was highly probable you were one of them, you well know

that your claim would be laughed to scorn, unless you could bring proof of *your own* relationship.

"In order then, to allay the distressing and perplexing doubts which must be produced in every thoughtful mind by the doctrine we have been speaking of, the maintainers of it endeavour to escape the difficulty by boldly assuming that the Apostolic Succession, *at least in the church to which they themselves happen to belong*, has been, and will ever be, preserved, by a continual miracle, from being broken by any irregularity, even in half-barbarian ages and regions, full of ignorance and disorder of all kinds.

"But as for *christian doctrine and practice*, in these, it is notorious what gross and wide spread corruptions have arisen in Christendom, beginning even in the very Apostolic age. Against *these* corruptions, it is manifest, no such supernatural safeguard was provided. The 'Apostolic Succession' of right faith and right conduct was *not* secured by any miraculous interference."

So that although confessedly the safeguard of an "Apostolic Succession" is *no* security against any amount of false teaching on the part of the clergy thus ordained, yet still the doctrine is believed by most persons who do believe it, *on their word!*

Whilst other ministers, sound in the faith, and with

evidence of the divine blessing on their labours, are to be avoided.*

But this shadowy rubbish is alas! no phantom in the wall of iron which it has raised to separate one part of the family of God from the other. For though hardly an individual except those skilled in controversy would be able to state exactly *what it is* that makes it so impossible for them to join their fellow-Christians at the Lord's Table, out of their own denomination, yet the fact remains that this *something* of whose nature they are ignorant, and which has in fact no real existence, remains a wall of iron still, and its builder and maker (for once I must be allowed to indulge in strong language) is just Satan himself.

It is, of course, believed that there is some virtue in the sacrament depending on the bread and wine being "consecrated," and "administered" by clergy-

* If, after carefully reading Dr. Jacob's book and Dr. Whately's, any of my readers remain unsatisfied, allow me to recommend them to try one more—the "See of S. Peter," by Mr. Allies, a Roman Catholic layman, once a clergyman in the English church. It is published by Burns and Oates; and disposes of the question from the "Catholic" point of view, finally, I think. And yet my own feeling is that S. Paul's mode of treating these questions is the best, where it is practicable—"Avoid" them.

men of the English, Roman, or Eastern "churches." If it is otherwise blessed and partaken of this virtue is supposed to be altogether wanting. This is a great error. There is no inherent virtue in the elements themselves either before or after consecration, the ordinance being of a spiritual nature, and it is equally an act of faith and obedience on the part of the members of one section of the body of Christ, as on that of the members of another; and He Himself is just as present at the breaking of bread, and makes Himself known to be present, at one gathering of His saints as at another (if some distinct heresy is not allowed by them). He does not absent Himself because certain forms which He never ordered are not complied with; nor have any men, whatever they may call themselves, the power to bring Him into their midst by a sort of incantation.

Besides the people of God know, and it is only to these I am addressing myself, that He is present to *save* when the Gospel is faithfully preached, by whomsoever the message is sent, and they surely know that the Holy Ghost is present in the hearts of believers of every denomination to sanctify them; so that they do admit His Presence with and in thousands who are outside the pale of their "church." Why therefore

cannot they grant honestly that *of course* He is specially present with all His children in the breaking of bread? And if *He* is there, can it be displeasing to Him that they should be there also?

If this is such an all-important means of grace, and if all dissenters are excluded from it, how in the name of common sense can it be accounted for that they are not as a rule less pious than members of the Church of England? The clergyman who feared the "lambs were outside," at any rate admitted this, and if they were, for myself, I should prefer being *without* the fold, in such innocent company, to being shut up with the wolves! But people do not reason thus foolishly in carnal things. In matters of science, or of worldly policy, we expect definite results to follow the observance of certain laws; and if so many exceptions became the rule, where would the rule be? How in fact are the great attainments in the knowledge of God, and in holiness of life, made by such men as John Bunyan, Baxter, Howe, Doddridge, Owen, Whitfield, and Samuel Rutherford to be accounted for?

If then *God* is present with them, *we* may be. But if, on the contrary, their error had been great enough to cause God to withdraw His presence from them,

then assuredly we should see the evidences of that withdrawal in a way no one pretends to see it in any Christian sect at present. As far as my own experience goes, and I think many will agree with me that it is theirs also, I find that God blesses most those (whatever sect they may belong to) who are the most faithful to those fundamental Truths which we all share in common. In one place we may find great life and earnestness in the Church of England, and plain evidences of God's blessing resting on that congregation. Numbers of souls are quickened under that ministry, and all the more enlightened Christians gather round it. Whilst among the dissenters there may be great coldness and deadness, and very likely false doctrine held and preached.

But in the next parish all this is perhaps reversed. The sound teaching, the blessing, the spirit of devotion, all centres at the Chapel, or at the meeting-room; whilst at the church there may be an unconverted man as clergyman, or one who, if converted, is unable to do any good, through the errors which are blinding him to the simplicity of the Gospel.

And take *any one* of the dissenting bodies. It would be folly to suppose that all over the world God's blessing especially accompanies that particular

sect. We know that it is not so. Just in proportion as the members of any branch of the visible church are faithful to Christ's Gospel, and to Himself as their Master, exactly so far, He owns and blesses their labours for Him. Some of the great Revivals in the Church of God have commenced in one branch of It, some in another. But wherever commenced it is the duty of all Christians to join heart and soul in the movement.

And what hinders this? Can it be said to be anything of more importance than a prejudice in favour of certain words? Some of our brethren call their superior ministers "presbyters," whilst we call them "bishops"—or "bishops" whereas we call ours "presbyters." It is absolutely a *word-fight* and no more; each party having Scriptural precedent for their custom, though both have departed from the original practice of the Church in Apostolic times, when we read of no unordained "elders"—as among the Presbyterians: nor was the Diaconate a mere stepping-stone to the other order in the Ministry—as now in the Church of England. It was a distinct order, with distinct work of its own, dealing mainly with temporalities as connected with the Church. If it comes to being a mere adoption of a list of names applied to

ministers in the New Testament, the Irvingites have the correct thing more than any of us. There is none, I believe, left out in their ministry, of the whole string of designations in Ephesians iv. 11, nor do they forget to imitate the ministry of *gifts*, as well as that of *orders*.

But can any one who knows experimentally what true Christianity is, believe that in these questions, and such like, lies its Power? No, these are the things against which S. Paul so repeatedly warned Timothy; —“Neither give heed to *fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith.*” Not “doting about questions, and *strifes of words*, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings, . . . from such withdraw thyself.” . . . “Charging them before the Lord that they *strive not about words* to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers.” “Foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do *gender strifes.*” And also Titus, “not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth.”

Truly, “there is no new thing under the sun!” And the Bible, with its marvellous adaptation to all times and circumstances, here anticipates the wordy,

strife-gendering question of Apostolic Succession. If Paul had lived at Oxford soon after the "Tracts for the Times" put it forth to perplex and mislead the ignorant, and to sow discord among the brethren, could he have better described it than as an "*endless genealogy*, which ministers questions rather than godly edifying," and "which genders strifes?"

Oh! for such a view of Jesus and His Love as shall raise the Church of God above these things!—for such a breath of the first freshness of the Faith as shall drive away these clouds and mists, which are but earthly exhalations, and yet alas! have sufficient density to obscure the brightness of the "light of the glorious Gospel of Christ;" and which "the god of this world" makes such use of to "blind the minds of them which believe not lest it should shine into their hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God—in the face of Jesus Christ";—often too casting a dark shadow over the path of the righteous, which *should* be "as the shining light, shining more and more unto the perfect day."

Some of us can hardly know friends from foes nor foes from friends, for the darkness that is blinding their eyes; but oh! you who are thus bewildered, *come to Christ* and He will give you light. Have you ever

earnestly besought God, with a *true heart*, to teach you the truth about these things by the Holy Ghost? Few people are absolutely sincere in their truth-seeking, though many may think they are; but all who do *truly* desire to know the truth, and will submit to His teaching and that alone, will be led to the knowledge of it. "God Who commands the light to shine out of darkness," will *Himself* then "shine in our hearts." But first we must have the *single-minded* spirit of S. Paul, who adds parenthetically in this beautiful passage (2 Cor. iii. 17—iv. 7), that he and Timothy preached *not themselves*, "but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves *your servants* for Jesus' sake."

No wonder that the clergy of later days repudiated the title of "minister," for *this* is the meaning of it. Not "*lords* over God's heritage," but *servants*—servants of God and of men.

And oh! my friends, believe me a minute acquaintance with Church History is not necessary to your salvation, nor to your growth in grace. Neither need you be left at the mercy of any ecclesiastical book-worm. Avoid these absurdities. Learn of your true High Priest, Who is "meek and lowly in heart, and you shall find rest unto your souls."

To "*know Him*;" and the power (not the *fact*,

observe, but the POWER) of His Resurrection,"—may this be our aspiration, and may He grant us our desire more and more for His dear Name's sake !

With one more passage from the work I have already quoted, I will take leave of this subject, and I am thankful that others have expressed so much better than I could do, the truths I wish to impress upon my readers.

“It was a truth clearly proclaimed by the Apostles, and received with undoubting and joyful confidence by the Church in those days, however it has been often unfortunately obscured and kept out of sight in later times, that every believer had himself an unrestricted access to Christ, and through Him unto the Father, without the intervention of any other person or thing whatever. That Jesus and His finished work, Jesus the Son of God, and the Son of Man, with His atoning Blood and justifying Righteousness, Jesus born into the world, dying, rising again, ascending into heaven, sitting at the right hand of the Father, and ever living to make intercession for us, was all that any man required for coming boldly into the presence of God, to receive the fulness of His favour and blessing ;—all that he needed to break down the barrier which sin had placed between him and the Holy One, to entitle

him to be enrolled as a free citizen of Christ's Kingdom, a son in God's family, an heir of the heavenly inheritance.

"And as Jesus, the Christ, was the sole author and all-sufficient security of this heavenly freedom; so besides Him there was no more need, or place, for any priest, or altar, or sacrifice, or mediator, or any one of whatsoever office, name, or service to stand between any man and God, to present his prayers at the throne of Grace, or to bring back a blessing from above. The rent veil of the Temple at the Death of Jesus indicated that the 'holiest of all' was no longer to be hidden or closed against the approach of men, but 'opened to all believers.' Instead of needing the priestly administrations of another, each Christian was to be himself a priest, called and consecrated to a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God—even the living sacrifice of himself, his soul and body—the sacrifices also of praise and thanksgiving, of self-denying kindness to others, and godliness of living for Christ's sake. 'That which the priesthood before Christ had only typified and prefigured was now accomplished for all; and the duty of constantly realizing it by the oblation of his own heart became the priestly duty of every individual Christian.'"

“Finally, it is needful to bear in mind one great principle of constant application in everything connected with our religion,—a principle which ought to influence the whole course of our ecclesiastical polity, all regulations of the Church, and every administration of its ordinances ; yes, and to influence all the members of any Christian community in their use of their church’s ministrations.

“This principle is the great master-truth, that the *true Church of Christ*,—the Body of which He is the Head,—‘the fulness of Him Who filleth all in all,’—to which alone all the promises and blessings of the kingdom of God belong,—is *an invisible society*, consisting of all those who are really united to Christ, and who from union with Him as the Head, are living members of His mystical Body ; and further that the visible Catholic church of professing Christians, or any particular branch or portion of it, can be called Christ’s Body only in a secondary, inferior, and imperfect sense ; their name describing only its professed intention, and not the reality of its actual being. . . . Christ, and not the church, is the Author of spiritual life ; and therefore it is not our being members of the church which unites us to Christ, but our being united to Christ makes us true members of His Church ;—that

every visible church on earth is necessarily a mixed body of real and nominal Christians; that outward admission to it and communion with it is of no spiritual profit, without the inward union with Christ Himself;—and that separation from it involves no spiritual loss, if the inward union with Christ is still preserved.”—
Dr. JACOB—“Ecclesiastical Polity of the New Testament.”

THE SACRAMENTS.

CLOSELY allied to this question of "Apostolic Succession," is of course the Sacramental one. The superstition that has led many to regard Baptism as a charm, has too often led them on to the fatal error of conceiving that no change of *heart* is necessary to salvation; their baptism having effected the only change required, if they go on without falling into any very flagrant sins. And equal superstition connected with the Eucharist still holds many of God's own people in bondage; not to the same danger to their own souls as the baptismal error, but still to the injury of the Cause of Christ in that they feel themselves unable to join their brethren round His table in that Communion which is the public expression and manifestation before the world of the Union of the Church in Him, and of that love to each other, which Christians are commanded to feel and to exhibit. Objections will assuredly be made to this by many who have much of the Master's spirit, and are as truly as any of us, sighing after more union between the saints. But they consider the

barrier which divides them from their fellow-Christians an impassable barrier *here*, though they acknowledge and are anticipating with joy, the removal of all such barriers in Heaven. But oh! that they would *re*-consider the melancholy conclusion to which they have come respecting the divisions of the Church on earth, Reconsider it prayerfully; asking our Father to shew them by His Spirit which should be the stronger, the Divine Bond which unites the members of the Body of Christ; or the man-made barriers which divide them.

For may we not allow for some divergence from our own views, even for a little more or less ignorance and superstition among our fellow-communicants, on the subject of the exact nature of the Sacraments?—a subject which after all is more or less mysterious. I am quite aware how the term "Sacramental Mysteries" has been abused, and how it ever raises the alarm and indignation of sound "Protestants;" but for all that, I have never heard one of them give a very lucid interpretation of 1 Peter iii. 21, and very few of them of Jo. iii. 5. But if we regret that we cannot explain one at least of these passages to suit our own views, the "Sacramentalists" are far worse off as regards them, for it is on the mysterious words of S. Peter I

have referred to, that they must found their system of "baptismal regeneration," which thus depends upon expressions, which, whether owing to clerical errors, or what not, can hardly be intelligible to any one.

The "water" in Jo. iii. 5, appears to me to refer to the Word of God, as that which alone can give life to the dead soul; shewing it in its purifying aspect, as in 1 Peter i. 22, 23. The symbol does at first appear a strange one, but it is not uncommon. The following passages, if considered carefully and without prejudice, will leave little doubt on this subject. James i. 18; 1 Peter i. 23; Luke viii. 11; Jo. xv. 3; Eph. v. 26; and Ps. cxix. 9. Also compare James i. 23-25, and 2 Cor. iii. 18, with Exodus xxxviii. 8, and with Titus iii. 5 (where "washing" is literally "laver").

But although I give this view as my own opinion. I cannot but see that a certain amount of mystification as to the Sacrament of Baptism is compatible with fervent piety and very advanced progress in the Christian Life. Therefore a difference of opinion on what is called "baptismal regeneration" cannot rightly be any barrier to our intercommunion. Those who though holding it, do yet so strongly own the after necessity of a personal acceptance of Christ by faith, can surely not refuse to join in communion those whose views though

differing when polemically stated, are practically the same as their own.

Those whom I must call "Evangelical High Churchmen," say that Baptism is a Covenant, and as such is analogous to Circumcision; yet they fully agree with S. Paul, and with all other "Evangelicals," that in point of fact "neither circumcision availeth anything," spiritually, "nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love."

One lesson I think we may profitably learn from the Baptismal question—the duty of simple obedience to a command we cannot fully enter into; and above all a lesson of charity towards those who differ from us. Surely on a subject into which we cannot go far ourselves without coming to difficulties we are unable to explain to our own satisfaction, it does not become us to be so severe on what we conceive to be the errors of others, that we cannot join them in what is clearly (whatever about the Lord's Supper may *not* be so clear to some minds) an act of obedience to our common Saviour and Master, done in remembrance of Him and specially ordained to express publicly our Union with Himself, and with each other.

And the difficulties connected with the Sacraments have been mostly of men's making. Certainly the

passages I have alluded to are more or less hard to be understood, but on the whole, these ordinances (the word "sacrament" is never used in Scripture) are beautifully simple, and show forth with Divine exactness our standing as Christians, together with our privileges, the mode of our spiritual sustenance, and our Hope.

It was not my intention to dwell on this subject, or to attempt to enter at all deeply into it, but I think an extract from a little book called "Chapters on Bible Classes," by the author of the "Copsley Annals," (an earnest member of the Church of England) may throw light on the subject of Baptism, for some who have been confused by the conflicting teaching on this subject. It is on "Preparation for Adult Baptism," and struck me as being very clearly and simply expressed.

It will be necessary "to prove to the learner the existence—now—here—at this very time—of two completely distinct conditions, as distinct and separate from each other as a resurrection-life divided from the former life by death—as the services of different masters—as a wife's in her marriage to successive husbands: the references, of course, being to the three comparisons in Rom. vi. and vii., ushered in by the 'Know ye not?' of the Apostle.

"In order to prevent confusion of metaphor, it will be well to dwell chiefly on the first. The state is supposed of a criminal so wholly sunk in sin as at last to be condemned to death. The justice of the condemnation is pointed out; the impossibility of the judge's passing over the crime consistently with being a just judge; the necessity for the vindication of a righteous law. Then let there follow the supposition of such a criminal's suffering the penalty of death, of his actually being submerged, of his life actually passing away under the river's tide, and of his guilt being met by the last and extreme punishment of the law. The hearer will then be led to imagine a practically impossible case—the case (as pictured forth in the dual type of Lev. xiv.) of another distinct life being given to that person—a life not burdened with the guilt, not under the threatened penalty of a broken law, as was the former life—the case of a second life divided from the first by death and burial—a life, if the owner so choose, to be dedicated to new purposes and new aims.

"It may take many words to bring such a picture before the scholar; but it must be done; and it must be done laboriously and patiently, if the foundation is to be laid for clear and distinct teaching concerning

the ordinance which, with a force and distinctness for which we can never enough thank Him who consecrated it for us, shows forth the Christian's stand-point and position when washed, justified, and sanctified.

“And in this place it may be necessary to remind the teacher that *Baptism by immersion* is the form of Baptism which furnishes the key to the teaching of the New Testament upon the subject; that the image must be exactly and vividly presented to the mind, in order to a full understanding of the force of the type wherein death, burial, and resurrection are evidently set forth. Such Baptism is rubrically directed by the Church of England (see Baptismal Services); baptism by sprinkling, or rather by ‘pouring water,’ being the authorised alternative ordinarily demanded by our climate, and ordinarily adopted as a matter of convenience. And although the form in which the rite is administered be comparatively of small moment, although the ‘sprinkling’ of the Old Testament ritual (Num. viii. 7; xix. 13, &c.,) showed forth cleansing and expunging of past uncleanness as truly as would immersion have shewn it forth, and the beautiful prophetic promise, ‘I will sprinkle clean water upon you and ye shall be clean,’ stood as the symbolic expression interpreted by the further promise, ‘From all your

filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you ;' still, and for the full comprehension of what Baptism signifies, *the passing under the water* must be clearly and vividly presented to the mind as that which gives the clue to the meaning of the Christ-ordained ritual.

"The teacher will now dwell with far more force, and more at length than is possible in a sketch like the present, upon the condition under sentence of death in which we stand by nature, and upon its utter depravity and guilt. 'The soul that sinneth it shall die.' That is God's sentence. He cannot pass it over. The curse of sin, the doom of death, is upon the sinner ; and it is the sense of this sin," that makes people afraid of God.

"And then will follow a setting forth of Christ as the Substitute of the sinner. It was necessary that He should become man to bear the curse of man. 'Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself took part of the same, that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil ; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their life-time subject to bondage.' As man's Substitute He died, having borne the whole curse, the whole punishment, in our stead. The cry, 'My God, My God, why hast

Thou forsaken Me?’ was for us. ‘He was made,’ or accounted, ‘sin for us.’ ‘Thy reproach hath broken My heart,’ was for us. ‘He was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities; all we like sheep have gone astray, but the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.’

“And thus came to pass the baptism He was baptised with; the death, and the leaving all the imputed sin, even as the grave-clothes in the sepulchre, on this side the grave; *the immersion, so to speak, under the ground is burial*; the resurrection to a new life, and to a glorified existence, and the ascension to the right hand of the Father until He shall appear the second time without sin unto salvation. And so he who comes to Christ, who takes Him at His word, who casts on Him his sin, who, by the Holy Spirit, is enabled to lay hold on Him as a Saviour, is regarded as having actually died for his own sin, and as having borne the penalty of the law in the person of his proxy; as having been buried when Christ was buried, the whole guilt and the whole punishment having been left on the other side of the grave; as having risen and ascended in His person, and as now, even now, by Him our Representative, sitting in heavenly places in the court of heaven.

"This is, so to speak, the forensic, or court of justice view of Baptism. It represents the position of the believer as regarded by the Father who gave His Son for his salvation. 'I through the law am dead to the law—or dead by the execution of the law upon my Substitute—and am reckoned to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.' 'I am crucified with Christ.' 'Buried with Him in baptism;' 'nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.' 'Wherein also we are risen with Him.' 'Old things are passed away, all things are become new.' We are in the resurrection-life; separated from the former by death and burial. 'If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.'

"The histories of Noah and of Israel, to each of whom belonged a former abode in sin or bondage, a leaving behind of the former life, and a starting upon an entirely fresh existence, dissevered from all that had gone before, will forcibly illustrate these points; and in Rom. vi. 1-6 a full view of the position represented by Baptism is given.

"And here will follow what we may term the *second*

part of the teaching of Baptism, summed up for us with admirable force and power in our Baptismal Service: 'Baptism doth represent unto us our profession, which is, to follow the example of our Saviour Christ, and to be made like unto Him; that as He died and rose again for us, so should we who are baptised die for sin and rise again unto righteousness.'"

The connection between these two parts of the teaching of Baptism, is then very simply and clearly stated, but much as I should like to give the whole passage, I feel it would be out of place here. But one more extract I must give from the closing part of the chapter. "After what has been written, it will be hardly needful to impress upon the teacher, who, be it remembered, is dealing with *adults*, the importance of earnestly impressing his hearers with the truth that the real Baptism—the repentance for the past, and the faith—the actual taking hold for himself of Jesus as a perfect Sacrifice and Substitute—the repentance and faith spoken of in the Catechism, and which are the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the sinner, must *precede* the shewing forth of the death unto sin and the new birth unto righteousness, in the sacred and beautiful outward rite. 'For by one Spirit are we all

baptised into one Body' (1 Cor. xii. 13). *It was when the real Baptism had taken place* in the eunuch's heart, when he had seen Christ as the Lamb 'led to the slaughter,' and had grasped the sacrifice with the hand of faith, *that he was baptised*. Philip said, 'If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest.' And he believed, and shewed forth his profession, and went on his way rejoicing. . . . And these views do not lower the dignity of our Christ-ordained Sacrament. Rather do they raise and elevate it. Although the soldier enrolled in the army must have already given his heart and determined to devote his life to the service of the King, the enlistment into the ranks and his public recognition as one of Christ's sworn cross-bearers is a happy and a joyful occasion. As the 27th Article, which is an admirable exponent of the subject, reminds us, 'The promises of forgiveness of sin, and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed; faith is confirmed, and grace increased by virtue of prayer unto God.'

"And let those of us who *have* passed from death unto life seek to walk as those that are alive from the dead, and remember that 'as many of us as have been baptised into Christ, have put on Christ'—that from

the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, whether it precede, as it should do, or whether it follow or accompany adult baptism, believers arise *covered over in Christ* to the greeting of the New Covenant, 'Ye are My sons and My daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.'"

I am sure the writer of this beautiful passage will forgive me for making use of it. It expresses so much more clearly than I could have done, the meaning of baptism as an initiatory rite; which, whilst I am on the subject of those ordinances to which the name of "sacraments" has been given, it is well to notice, as error on these subjects has been the cause of most of the schisms in the Church.

Very valuable also is the chapter on "Preparation for the Lord's Supper," showing how every action of our Lord, on that "night much to be remembered," was a part of the ceremonial belonging to the Passover Feast, "which for 1500 years had shone through the twilight of the world's history as a watch-fire kept on from generation to generation, until the True Light should Himself shine."

But into this Pascal aspect of the Eucharist I must not enter, interesting and instructive though it be; but would refer any of my readers who may not be minutely acquainted with its details, to the Table in the little

book from which I have quoted at such length; and also to Lightfoot's Works—"Hebrew and Talmudical Exercitations on St. Matthew;"—written more than 200 years ago—where the comparison is given more at large. The whole of these "Exercitations" are replete with deeply interesting information relative to Jewish practices and ceremonies; throwing a peculiar light on many passages of the New Testament, which indeed can only be partially understood without a thorough knowledge of all that relates to the earlier and anticipative dispensation, whose types and shadows were faintly to figure forth the mighty Sacrifice of "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

"The blood of bulls and of goats," had been Christ's blood, just as the wine now became so—in figure. God has ever taught by pictures, as we teach our children. But for us this ordinance is more than barely symbolical. It is emphatically, as the word Eucharist implies, a sacrifice of praise. Protestants shrink with horror at such an application of the word "sacrifice;" but S. Paul implied nothing propitiatory by it when he said, "I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." See also Hosea xiv. 2, and

Heb. xiii. 15. If our bodies may be offered to God as living sacrifices ;—if, *after we are forgiven* by God, we are to “render Him the calves of our lips ;”—if, to put the case as strongly as it is put in the Epistle to the Hebrews, *just because* Jesus has as the Great Sin Offering once and for ever sanctified us by His own Blood, suffering without the gate, we are to offer “by Him the sacrifice of praise continually ;” why may we not precisely in the same sense, break the bread, and drink the cup as an act of praise to God who has given His Son for our redemption? That seems to me to be the God-ward, or Eucharistic aspect of the ordinance.

And here again we are called upon to “try things that differ.” If a clergyman believes that in the Lord’s Supper, an *expiatory* sacrifice is offered, he is counting the One Offering of Jesus Christ, an insufficient offering, and at his church, it would be conniving at down-right blasphemy to communicate. But do many—do any Christian High Churchmen hold this? I have known and asked many, but have always been answered that they consider it as purely a sacrifice of praise. We all know that the opposite view *is* held and taught ; but by, I believe, a minority of High Churchmen : and as the sense in which the word “sacrifice” is used, is so important, I think it would

be wiser, patiently to enquire what is meant by it, than to condemn indiscriminately all who use it. Not that I would advocate the use of a word liable to such abuses, and to so much misconstruction. There are plenty of other words by which we may give expression to the thought that this ordinance is one of praise; but none the less is it an illiberal and carping spirit that "makes a man an offender for a word." And it is the more strange that this should be done by members of the Church of England, whose own beautiful Communion Service contains the same expression, used in a way that makes it impossible almost to misunderstand it. Even the more enlightened Roman Catholics do not believe that the sacraments are anything but the means by which the Blood of Christ, once shed, is applied to their souls. And although this even is not a true statement, and their views on this subject are full of contradiction and confusion, still we should be careful not to accuse any of greater error than they really hold.

I know well how many dear saints of God are clinging with all their strength to what they believe to be of such intense importance, and so entirely essential to God's Honour and Glory in His Church, and the maintenance of the Divine Life in their own souls; the

doctrine of what they call the "Real Presence." The *Real Presence*—yes, truly, they are blessed words! and the *fact* of His Presence in which "is fulness of joy," is far more blessed! And we need not wait for Heaven to enjoy it. Thank God! we have it here. He Himself with us, in us—abiding always. If this were only to be enjoyed at the Altar who would not cry out with David when in the wilderness, meaning it literally, as he did—"My flesh longeth for Thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; to see Thy power and Thy glory, so as I have seen Thee in the sanctuary." "*One thing* have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord *all the days of my life*, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple." "Then will I go to the Altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy?"

And this is exactly the position that these dear people take. Having been made once and for ever an "Habitation of God through the Spirit;" each of them individually, as well as the whole Church collectively; they go back, and place themselves in theory (they cannot do it in fact), where David stood, and all the Old Testament saints; as the "friends of God," though often doubtful of His Friendship. But Jesus, praying for the Unity of His Church, said that

He had already ensured it, thus; "And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be One, even as We are One: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in One." (John. xvii. 22, 23).

"*I in them.*" This is then the mode of our Union. And this is "the mystery which hath been hid for ages and generations, but now is made manifest to His saints: . . . which is *Christ in you*, the hope of glory." This was never known to David; for "from the beginning of the world" it "hath been *hid in God.*" It was manifested, when, on the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Ghost descended to take up His Abode in the hearts of those who believed in Jesus Christ; thus forming them into His Body, the Church. This was what Christ had promised them. "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever (see Psalm lxxiii. 18); even the Spirit of truth; . . . ye know Him; for He dwelleth *with* you, and *shall be in you.*" (John xiv. 16, 17). He goes on to say in the 16th chapter and 7th verse, "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you."

Here He promises His disciples, that when He shall leave them, One shall be sent to take His place, Who shall even more than fill it; so that it shall be *better* for His people that He shall depart, and that that other Comforter shall come. Which, however, is not another, in that He is the "Spirit of Christ," and it is of Him He testifies; and it is through the *Spirit* that *Christ* dwells in our hearts by faith. And this He says Himself in Jo. xiv. 18. "I will not leave you comfortless; *I* will come to you." I think, from the connection in which this stands, that He does not here speak of His Coming in Person, either at His second Advent, or His occasional visits to His disciples after His Resurrection. These latter were to be their solace *until* His Spirit came to bring His Real, Spiritual, Abiding Presence ("I in them"); which was to be better for them than His visible bodily presence had been, because though they had seen Him with their eyes; and had heard His Voice; and had handled Him; and had loved Him, as a Master, and Teacher, and Friend; and had (more or less clearly) believed in Him as the Son of God; and certainly as the Redeemer of Israel: still they were not yet a part of Himself, purchased by His Blood, inhabited by His Spirit. The Holy Ghost had "*dwelt with*" them, but

not yet "*in*" them. And here Christ had drawn an important distinction. The Holy Ghost had always dwelt *with* the people of God, He had taught, guided, and in a manner, sanctified them. He had often inspired them to speak and write the very words of God. He had worked miracles through them. When these influences came upon them it is expressed in the Old Testament by a word signifying "clothed" in the Hebrew (see margin, in many places). Thus even of such men as Saul, unsanctified in heart and life, we read that at a moment of inspiration the Spirit "clothed" them. He also strove with the ungodly, as we read in Gen. vi. 3, where the Lord said before the Flood, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man." Thus He had been "with" men during the Dispensation of God the Father—that is to say, from the fall of man until the birth of Christ. But though *with* men, it was not a spiritual dispensation. Jehovah was then ruling the world, but He had not yet revealed His Son, nor His Spirit. He Himself was locally present during the time that the Shekinah was glorifying the Holy of Holies, above the Mercy-Seat. But the distinctive Personality of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, were but dimly known, if known at all.

After the Birth of Christ began the 2nd Dispensa-

tion—that of the Son : when God was specially present on earth, in the Person, and Bodily form of Jesus Christ.

But the Holy Ghost though still “with” men, was not yet “given” (see Jo. vii. 39). Not till the Day of Pentecost did He take God’s place on earth, commencing on that day the Dispensation in which we are now living—the Dispensation of the Holy Ghost. It is the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity Who is now specially present upon Earth, no longer merely *influencing* God’s people, but abiding in their hearts. And thus it is as S. Paul tells us, that our bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost. Instead of a merely outside influence, such as in the Old Testament is described as “clothing” men, the expression is reversed and we are told that it is our bodies that *clothe the Spirit*. And this is no mere sophistry. It means practically that instead of His influencing us, or occasionally inspiring us, as He did the saints of that Dispensation, He abides in us always, a Living Power of Holiness, consecrating us to God’s service. Therefore a far higher standard of holiness is expected from us, and our sins being committed against such sufficient Grace, are far more heinous than their’s were. This alone can account fully for the loose morality of even

the saints in Old Testament times. We feel instinctively, as we read their lives, that they were living under different conditions. They knew not the indwelling of the Holy Ghost.

Moreover it does not appear that they ever had a full knowledge of their everlasting acceptance in Christ, and the complete pardon of their sins for ever. We know now, standing in the light of the Sun of Righteousness, that in the counsels of God His saints were ever safe in His keeping, then, as now. And this they sometimes expressed themselves, whilst writing under inspiration. But that it was their habitual experience, I cannot hold. The Writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews seems clearly to shew this, arguing, (ch. x. 1-3) that "those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually," could never "make the comers thereunto perfect, ("perfect, as pertaining to the *conscience*," as he explains in ch. ix. 9) for then they would have ceased to be offered, because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again of sins every year." I remember once hearing a Roman Catholic say that when he came away from confession, he felt so light-hearted; and his expression struck me—"I feel like having a new suit

of clothes on, all fresh and clean." Now it must have been something of this sort, that the Jewish saints felt on the Day of Atonement, when the High Priest returned alive, after having been alone into the Holy of Holies, "*not without blood*, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people." His return to the congregation shewed that he had been accepted; (and his preservation we now see that he owed to the intercession of Jesus. Compare Lev. xvi. 13, with Heb. vii. 25) and therefore they could rejoice with a purged conscience. Their's however was no false peace, founded on a man's assurance of pardon. Their God had proclaimed their pardon—as we read in Lev. xvi. 30. "On that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord;" so they had a right to go away rejoicing that they were made "whiter than snow." But this consciousness of purity was only calculated to endure for a time: sin very soon again defiled their consciences. They could but enjoy occasional glimpses of the glory. The atonement was only made at the one spot appointed by God. There alone could they see the blood shed that they knew made the atonement for their souls, and "without" that "shedding of blood was no remission."

We know that "it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins," and that these offerings were but symbols of a Greater Sacrifice, and more precious Blood-shedding ; but they were all important to the Jews, as their only way of access to God. It was before His Altar alone that David could fully see and realise his pardon and acceptance, and come with boldness into the presence of Him Who through all the mist of types and shadows, was his "exceeding Joy." No wonder then that he loved the courts of that sanctuary, and in the fervour of his longing, yea even fainting after them, envied even the little birds that had built their nests there ! (See Ps. lxxxiv. 1-3.)

But *we* have an High Priest Who "after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever," received from God, the Righteous Judge, the full assurance of His complete acceptance, in that He raised Him from the dead. On His Resurrection hinged the whole question of the acceptance of His people also. "If Christ be not raised, our faith is vain ; we are yet in our sins." But as He *is* raised, the converse holds true, our faith is not vain ; we are *no longer in our sins*. "For by One Offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us : for after that He had said before, This is the

covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord ; I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them ; And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin. Having therefore, brethren, liberty to enter into the Holiest by the Blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath now made for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh ; And having an High Priest over the house of God ; let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith." (Heb. x. 14-22.) For this High Priest is not only risen, but ascended. "By His own Blood, He entered in once into the Holy Place, *having obtained eternal redemption for us.*" (Heb. ix. 12.) "Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true ; but into heaven Itself, now to appear in the presence of God *for us.*" (Heb. ix. 24.) He "is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens ; Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, . . . *for this He did once when He offered up Himself.*" (Heb. vii. 25, 27.) It is in Him that God sees us. He reckons us (and tells us to *reckon ourselves*, Rom. vi. 11) to have died when His Son died upon the Cross ; to

have been buried when He was buried ; to have risen when He rose ; and to have ascended when He ascended ; so that our true position is even now where He is in the Heavenlies. (Eph. ii. 5, 6.) There Christ is as "*our Fore-runner for us* entered." (Heb. vi. 20.) It is because He is there that we are by faith to see ourselves there. We are not there yet actually, but are truly there in Him our Representative.

"As surely as He overcame,
And triumphed once for you—
So surely ye who love His Name
Shall through Him triumph too."

Now these truths, though they may appear at first sight to have no immediate connection with the Sacramental doctrine of the "Real Presence ;" are, in fact, of the greatest importance to our obtaining clear views on that subject. And they are truths which are never distinctly held by any who hold that doctrine. A belief in the perfect acceptance, and eternal safety of "the Church" may be held. But they could not, as members of it, claim a *personal* acceptance *now* ; for this they would consider unwarrantable presumption. And this arises from the confusion that is made between the visible and invisible churches. Sometimes the promises made to the members of the true Church of

God are applied to any members of the merely outward church : whilst at another time it is considered presumption for the saints to rejoice in their complete acceptance in Christ, on the ground that no one can be quite forgiven and have Eternal Life here. Living in this state of uncertainty as to their position, but having the Love of God shed abroad in their hearts, and often with much more grace than light, the true Christians holding these views feel a need that nothing but the consciousness of the presence of Christ within them can satisfy. They are never taught that He *is* continually abiding in them, and therefore this imperfection in their apprehension deprives them of much peace and joy ; for His Presence is only apprehended by faith, and the unbelieving cannot enjoy the full sweetness of it. To them as to Israel of old "Christ in you, the hope of glory," remains the hidden mystery, although it should be "made manifest to His saints." But at the Altar they allow themselves to realise and rejoice in it, at least for a while. There they see by faith His Body broken, and His Blood shed ; and they know it was for them. And though theirs may be a faith mixed with superstition, it is a true faith, and one that lays hold on Him Who is so infinitely compassionate to all His ignorant misconceiving people,

and sends none empty away that truly seek Him. At such times they truly feed on Christ, with quickened affections, if not understanding ; and so just like David their souls long for what they believe to be His Altar, and they say, and sing with him, (meaning it of the actual building as he did) "Lord, I have loved the habitation of Thine House, and the Place where Thine Honour dwelleth."

It is thus I always think of them, and with a great yearning over them that they should know the fulness of the faith, and the exceeding blessedness which is theirs, if they would only believe it. Instead of these transient glimpses of the Real Presence, they are invited to enjoy It always. They cannot and do not say they do that. But it is to this, and nothing less that we are called, and this should be the privilege of every child of God. Is it our own? Are we who profess to appreciate Evangelical truth, and think we have been brought to a clearer knowledge of it than the Ritualists ;—are we ever walking in the blessed consciousness of the Real Presence? Is the "*I in them*" no longer a mystery to us ; and can we say truly "I am crucified with Christ : nevertheless I live ; yet not I, but *Christ liveth in me* : and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God,

Who loved me, and gave Himself for me"? Our Protestantism will avail us nothing without this experience. Our orthodoxy may be unimpeachable: we may be forever "*protesting*" against this error or that; but we shall never rise above the spirit of sectarianism; we shall never do anything (comparatively speaking) worth naming, for Christ, until this is fully known to us, and we abide in Him, and He in us.

But apart from this abiding indwelling of Christ by the Spirit, we may also believe in His special personal presence "*in the midst*," when His people are gathered in His Name. For this is but the fulfilment of His own promise. Here we are in the midst of mysteries. We use terms—but like children, our language is far above our comprehension. We know that God is everywhere. We know also that the human body of our Lord Jesus Christ has a local habitation, which is Heaven. But in a way that we may rejoice in, though we cannot understand it, Jesus Himself is directly present with us when we meet for worship. Surely then we may believe very specially in His Real Presence at His own Sacrament of Love. *He is there*: not *in the bread*, but *at the Table*; and thus, though our eyes are still holden that we cannot see Him, truly is He made known to us in the breaking of bread.

The remarks I have made have applied only to the people of God. I am aware that a large proportion of those holding the doctrines I have alluded to, are not spiritual worshippers in any sense at all; and their religion is then of course merely a lifeless formalism, mixed with superstition, and with more or less frivolity. But even in their case there may be a true feeling after God. Man, it has been said, is a religious animal. Rather, man has been made in the Image of his Creator, and however sindefiled he may be, and however darkly ignorant, he has at times vague yearnings after the Infinite, and these an elaborate ritual more or less satisfy; or it may be, the more simple beauties of music and architecture, and the poetry of the beautiful liturgy of the church, and the touching hymns of modern days. How one longs to proclaim to such seekers, with Apostolic power—"Whom ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you!"

I have not touched on the gross materialism which teaches that in the bread and wine is communicated not only the Spiritual Nature of our Lord, but also that in it we actually eat His human body, and drink His blood; for I positively cannot believe, or at any rate cannot the least realize, that any true Christian

can believe anything so revolting. If this doctrine is indeed held by any children of God, it must be as a mere dogma in the head, to which assent is given at the command of the authorities to whom they have submitted their reason. But it is impossible that any of them could for a moment dwell upon it, or even endure the thought of it, consciously, during the seasons of communion with Christ. For we who have received a spiritual nature, have spiritual instincts, that must desire and seek after spiritual communion only with our God; even in spite of the holding as a creed, such a debasing superstition as the doctrine of transubstantiation.

This error has arisen from the tendency of the human heart to materialize spiritual truths. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." We see this in the case of Nicodemus, who confused spiritual with natural life. In the Samaritan woman, in the next chapter, who misunderstood our Lord as to the "water which He would give;" concluding it was literally something to drink which He offered. And we see it again in the 6th chapter of S. John's gospel,

where the originators* of the doctrine of transubstantiation enquire, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" And this (although, in this first phase of it, merely an enquiry) called forth from the Lord the solemn, but alas neglected warning, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth ; the flesh profiteth nothing : the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." If we carefully read this chapter we shall see the extreme naturalness (if I may so express myself) of the comparison between the actual bread, for which a crowd of the indigent Jews had followed Him, that they might obtain food for their bodies—and Himself, as the "One Thing needful," the true and only food for the soul, with which alone the spiritual hunger from which all suffer, though perhaps they know it not, may be satisfied. "The bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world." "He that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me." And this "eating" He shows to be the same thing as "coming" to Him, and "believing" on Him. "I am the bread of life : he that *cometh* to Me

* These Jews perhaps hardly deserve such a title, for long before their days Osiris had been periodically made into cakes and eaten by the Egyptians.

shall, never hunger : and he that *believeth* on Me shall never thirst." "He that *cometh* to Me I will in no wise cast out," and "He that *believeth* in Me hath everlasting life."

That this truth here so plainly stated 'is taught in symbol in the Eucharist is certain. It sets forth by picture, as it were, the great spiritual fact that as the Divine life is first communicated by coming to Jesus for it, so is it sustained by continually feeding upon Him. And this "feeding" takes place in every act of true Communion. We feed on Christ whenever we worship Him, meditate on His Word, and "hold sweet converse" about Him with each other. We also, and very specially, feed on Him in the breaking of bread, and therefore in this way are undoubtedly *recipients*. For who can feed on Christ without partaking of His life "more abundantly"?

It is also important to remember that the symbols of bread and wine are *separate*, as representing the *dead* body of Christ. We thus "shew forth His death;" but in doing so we feed not on a dead, but on a Risen and Ascended Lord.

This Sacrament is also very specially—amongst the wondrously manifold aspects of it, *all* of which are so precious—an *expression of love* and fealty on our part

towards Him who has so loved us. We know that in the natural world there are sacraments of love, which Love does not seek to analyse, nor can fully understand : and from these we may learn the nature of a sacrament.

When Jesus left His beloved ones He asked them to do that in remembrance of Him, which should shew forth many things, but which should also be just simply an act of Love. And how supremely blessed that our need of a mode of expression of love *beyond all words* should be provided for ! We often feel how poor and weak our words are, and how insufficient : and we know how blundering they are, and how misleading. What an unspeakable blessing that where we would express that which no language can convey, it is not left to *words* to try and do it, and to make mistakes over it, but by an act symbolical of the very incorporation of Christ's Life in us, we may in some measure express that which is inexpressible, and enter by faith into the Joy of that Day when we shall appear as "the Bride, the Lamb's Wife."

"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the Blood of Christ?" This cup of blessing, sets forth the cup full of blessings, which Jesus gives us. And it is ours, only because He has

drunk to the dregs, the cup of wrath. That was His cup. This is ours. "The path of the just is as the shining light, shining more and more unto the perfect day." But it is so because He passed through the very blackness of darkness. He intended our joy to be as true as His sorrow : yet how little do we know of it ! S. Peter takes it for granted that it is a "joy unspeakable and full of glory." And yet surely we cannot truly say that this describes our habitual joy in the Lord ? But it is only because we have so grievously fallen away from our privileges, that it does not. Still, "the joy of the Lord is our strength ;" and precisely in proportion to the joy is the strength. If we are not rejoicing in the Lord we cannot be serving Him with any measure of success. We should therefore make it our urgent prayer, that He would *increase our joy in Him*, so that we may serve Him with *gladness*. He does not care for any other service ; He has no desire to be served as a task-master. "The Lord loveth a cheerful giver." I have heard it very truly said, that it is one of the hard and unjust thoughts of God, that the devil so often puts into the minds of Christians, that the work they take pleasure in is less acceptable to God, than that which they dislike doing. Just as if our Father were one who was

pleased with our unhappiness, instead of delighting in our joy. He is One, on the contrary, Whose Mind is more set on the entire happiness, in every way, of His children, than any earthly parent's could be. And though if we *will* try our own plans of happiness, rather than His, He must bring us into His way by chastisement, still the end He always has in view, whether we see it or not, is our joy, which is ever bound up with His glory. If we believe what God is to us in Christ, and give ourselves up to Him, there is not the slightest doubt we shall be happy. And the earlier we begin, and the more entire our surrender, the more complete will be our joy. Of course it must be so. Does God love us or not? If He does, the more we allow Him to do His will in us, the more certain we may be of having our happiness ensured. Could it be otherwise? And yet we all know that exactly the reverse of this is the notion prevalent in the world as to the character of our Father in Heaven, and the nature of His service. How common is the idea that if a young person turns "very religious" or, as is still more commonly said, "serious," by which is really meant "gloomy"—that he is done for altogether, as far as pleasure goes. Levi the publican made a feast, and called his friends and neighbours to it, to

celebrate his conversion. But a conversion is the very last occasion now that the world rejoices over.

We know however, though not at all as we should do, that ours is a "pleasant path." It begins with blessing—for "Blessed is the man whose iniquity is forgiven, and whose sin is covered;" and this is the portion of the "little children" in Christ; the first stage of the Christian course (see 1 John. ii. 12): and this increases into a widening blessedness, until at last we hear the welcoming words, "Come, ye Blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." This is our calling, and this our portion. Should we, or should we not be a rejoicing people?

The cup of which we drink at the Lord's Table, specially called "the cup of blessing;"—in the all-embracing teaching of this wondrous ordinance,—shows forth this "Wine of gladness," that truly "strengtheneth man's heart": so that Christ as our Nourishment, Gladness, and Strength, is figured forth in the elements of bread and wine.

I need not say to those "that love His appearing," that it is an anticipative ordinance. The word tells us that, and our hearts respond to it. "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the

Lord's death till He come." As the ancient sacrifices were anticipative of Him who should come to be the Sin Offering ; so in our Communion Feast do we look forward to that "better" and "Blessed Hope, even the glorious appearing of the great God, our Saviour Jesus Christ;" "Whom having not seen we love." "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many ; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin (or a sin-offering) unto salvation." And thus are the past and future linked together in our present, by Him Who is "the Same—yesterday, to-day, and for ever." We may still feel ourselves in that upper chamber, Jesus Himself handing us the bread and wine across the centuries ; whilst we are looking forward to a far different scene—the Wedding Supper of the Lamb.

But I have kept to the last that aspect of the Lord's Supper which more particularly bears upon my subject. It is not an expression of affection only towards the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ, but towards every member of His Body. The old custom of handing round the Loving Cup, should never be extinct in the family of the God of Love. But is this aspect of the ordinance either felt or exhibited by us as it should be? Do we not say by our actions, if not in words, in our

proud exclusiveness, "Stand off, I am holier than thou!" Where, alas! is *now* the Church's *Loving Cup*? Are not some of her members saying to the others, "You shall not drink of my cup, nor will I drink of yours!" Are they *thus* exhibiting the Oneness of the Church? or are they not rather (except in the extreme cases of heresy where separation is necessary) pouring contempt on the Religion of Christ?

It has been very well said in a tract published by W. H. Broom, (one of the publishers of the works of that body of "brethren" of whose views Mr Darby is the exponent) entitled "Death and Life: Union and Glory:" that, "it was our Lord's desire that His Church should not only be one Body in the sight of God, but also in the sight of the world, so that the world might believe and acknowledge that God had sent Jesus. But instead of this, man has come in with *his* thoughts and *his* arrangements, and the result has been that the Church, instead of manifesting its Unity, is divided into many and various sects. How grievous must this be to Him Who is the Head of the Body! The Lord's Supper is intended to be the outward expression or symbol of the Oneness and Unity of the Church (1 Cor. x. 16, 17). . . . It will

doubtless be acknowledged that these statements concerning the unity of the Body are scriptural, and therefore true ; but the question will at once arise, Where is the Body of Christ, the Church of God, in these days seen in its Oneness? It is nowhere to be seen."

But after expressing these truths the writer proceeds to say, "There are attempts ; but, alas ! they have proved signal failures. There is the Evangelical Alliance. That system professes to manifest the union of the Body. But does it do so? Well, put it to the test, and try it. Let some Christian, in the midst of its meetings, where the Church's Oneness is said to be shown forth, propose that that which the Word of God instructs the Christian to celebrate as the expression of that Unity should be commemorated. What would take place? Why the sectarian and divided state of the Church would be at once manifested, and that by the very thing which God has instituted as a symbol of its unity, even the Supper of the Lord, which He calls the COMMUNION of the Body and Blood of Christ. I ask, What is that union worth that will not stand the test of God's Word?"

I am glad that he *asks*, and am happy to be able to answer his previous question—"What *would* take

place?" Then, I think any answer to the last will not be required. What *did* take place at New York, on Sunday, Oct. 5, 1873, at the close of the "General Conference of Christians of All Nations," was *this*. I quote from "Evangelical Christendom." "In the afternoon, according to previous announcement, the Communion of the Lord's Supper was celebrated in the Madison Square Presbyterian Church, every part of which was filled with the throng of communicants before the hour for the services. About 2500 Christians of different nations were present. Rev. Dr. Adams, the pastor, conducted the exercises, and administered the ordinance. After a few remarks, he called upon the Dean of Canterbury, who said he knew no way in which the communion of saints could better be shewn than in this partaking together of the sacramental bread and wine. Each might have his own way of celebrating the divine ordinance, but when they met together from various climes they shewed the reality of the unity which bound them together, by partaking, in union with believers of every creed, of the emblems of their dead and risen Lord. He then led the congregation in the Lord's Prayer and the Apostles' Creed," &c.

I think I am right in believing that this is by no

means an unusual conclusion to the gatherings of the Evangelical Alliance. It has thus been "put to the test" which our friend proposed as conclusive, and according to that test has proved very far indeed from "a signal failure!" Whether or not he is now a member of the Evangelical Alliance I cannot say. But let us hope that he is true to his expressions of grief at the spirit of separatism in Christ's Church, and has hailed with delight the result of his own test, recognising it, with us, to be a bright indication of better days ahead. The visible union in Christ of all His people, has been the great End which the Evangelical Alliance have for many years set before them; and in spite of much misunderstanding and contumely, have nobly held on their way, God helping them, until the present time; and we may, and I am sure we *must* most warmly congratulate them on these glorious results. May God bless and prosper them! and keep their work pure, and free from any taint of a *spurious* liberality. One of the great safeguards against this danger will be, that all truly enlightened Christians should join in the effort, giving it their earnest prayers; instead of keeping aloof from, and criticising it. It is worthy of thankful notice that the Dean of Canterbury was the bearer of a letter of warm greeting and congratulation from the

Archbishop to the Society, expressing his "trust that the Holy Spirit might guide all who took part in the discussions;" and his "prayer" "that God may hasten the time when the differences which at present tend too much to keep Christians asunder may be removed, and when all who love the Lord Jesus Christ sincerely may be able without compromise of principle to unite both outwardly and in spirit." In this most Christian prayer let us all join! Père Hyacinth also wrote a beautiful letter to the Alliance, containing the same sentiments, and much regretting his inability to attend the Conference.

Thank God! in these latter days we do see some signs of the love of Christ constraining men much more than in some years back, to forget their wretched Shibboleths, and join each other in the worship of their common Father, ranking themselves under His Banner of Love. And surely we may hope that as the Coming of the Lord draws nigh, and the anti-christian powers of evil gather themselves together for the last great conflict, that Christians also in the face of the foe, and in the cause of their Lord, will draw closer round Him, and therefore round each other; becoming more *compact*, as evil appears to be doing, until at last Christ's Body as a Whole, will with one

mighty triumph, conquer for ever the hosts of anti-christ compact also under his supremacy.

It is indeed a sorrowful reflection that those Ordinances which were for our peace, have been made by us an occasion of falling ! And specially that that Communion Feast, which was to show forth the Oneness of the Church, has been made by Christians a wall of separation between them !

It has even become the mark of a party to speak of the Lord's Supper by a particular name, and though *all* the names for it, are each so beautiful, that every one of them might furnish a subject for most profitable meditation, each setting forth a true, though different aspect of the blessed Ordinance ; yet Christians can usually only use one of these ; nay, would often be scandalised at hearing any other, and would consider it a dangerous innovation worthy of special protest, were any such expressions foreign to their own sect, introduced into their system. I hope and believe these childish ignorant prejudices are lessening their hold, at least on some of the Lord's people ; but still enough of this spirit remains to be a great disgrace to the Church. To those whose religion is made up of externals, one of course *expects* that words and ceremonies should be all important, but to those who do

know in some measure what it is to worship God in spirit and in truth, it is indeed a pitiable state of mind and feeling. And I deny that I have exaggerated the prejudice. Let any of my readers who are members of the dissenting bodies, imagine the consternation which would be produced in their chapels, if the new minister were to announce the "Holy Communion" for the next Sunday! And would not an Evangelical clergyman have the profoundest suspicions of a curate who spoke of the "Celebration"? Or a High Churchman of one who could use such an expression as the "Lord's Supper"? and any English churchman would at once set down as a Plymouth brother only, one who could speak of "breaking bread"! How often one hears it said of any one of these expressions, "Oh! I *can't bear* that word."

But let us cursorily consider the words to which so much exception is taken. And first, we will notice

"Celebration." This, considered an unmistakable sign of "a party," is to my own mind, one of the most beautiful of all these designations. Is it *not* a Celebration, first, and foremost, of the Death of Christ, by which we have been made partakers of His Life? The word implies "commemoration," but with a jubilant note of praise in it. Something as the

Prayer-book does . . . "in memory of His Blessed Death, until His Coming again." And singularly enough, my late quotation from a tract by one of the exclusive brethren, contains the very word, and this, from a member of the body, which of all others, is peculiarly exact in points of doctrine. Thus do extremes meet! We do well to object to the word "celebrant," as applied exclusively to the clergyman who hands the bread and wine. He is merely a representative of the other communicants, and no more a celebrant than they all are.

"Communion"—with our Lord, and with each other; and in Him, with the whole family of God. Surely *this* word requires no apology!

"Sacrament," meant I believe originally an oath of allegiance, but afterwards came to mean anything sacred. Then the idea of symbol became attached to it, and soon any amount of superstition. So that this word, certainly, by this time, conveys no particularly definite meaning. Still the term though not a Scriptural one, is to me very precious; expressing as it does in a way peculiar to itself, the idea of the Act as a Divine expression and pledge of the mutual Love and Faithfulness of Christ and His Church. (Cant. i. 2.)

"Eucharist," presents the God-ward, or Praise-

giving aspect of the Celebration ; and in this sense, it is, as I have remarked before, peculiarly a "sacrifice of praise."

"The Ordinance." This is a matter of fact statement doubtless ; but where every fact concerned is of value, this is no objection to it. This Sacrament is the Ordinance of our Master, and the term implies especially on our part—obedience.

"The Lord's Supper" is the simplest of all, and perhaps the most touching. How it brings to our minds that Supper ! The poor, bare room—Our Blessed One just entering so calmly, so majestically into His Agony—the Passover "Showing forth"—the parting so near at hand—the "Lord, is it I?" of the friends and the betrayer—the "Do this in Remembrance of Me"—"Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end."

"Breaking Bread." Very Scriptural : especially recalling the simplicity of Apostolic days, when the first Christians "broke bread from house to house."

These are the terms which have been separately appropriated by the different parties, and struggled for, as words containing the whole truth concerning the Ordinance, when in fact not one of them does that, nor could do it. We get a far clearer view of these

truths when we take all the party names, and put them together. They are like the rays of the sunbeam, beautiful when separated by the prism, but more complete, and giving a truer light when blended together.

So infinitesimal are some of the points of sacramental dispute, and to such an extent are they magnified, that when in a letter which recently appeared in the "Standard" Newspaper, from a moderate High Churchman, on the subject of "Church Reform," he makes the sensible, and one might have imagined *un-*agonising suggestion that when the number of communicants was very great, the Low Church custom should be observed of only repeating the sentences once to each party, instead of to every individual; he considers it necessary to do so with the most profound apologies, saying how it grieves him to know what deep pain he must be inflicting on many churchmen, and that only the absolute necessity of some such measure in some cases made him propose a remedy so extreme.

This shews the superstitious importance that is attached to such a trifle. It is no doubt more appropriate, and far more impressive, to repeat the words to each person when the communicants are *not* very numerous. But it becomes the very reverse of im-

pressive when they are repeated several hundred times ; and the only ground on which such an arrangement can be advocated is that the sentences are a charm, and as such indispensable.

If I might venture to make a suggestion on such a seemingly delicate point, it would be that where there are few communicants the High Church custom should be observed : where there are a great many, the Low : and where a moderate number that the whole sentence should be once repeated each time, to the first person, and that to each of the rest *half* of the sentences should be addressed, commencing "Take and eat this ;"—"Drink this," to the end. I have once heard this done, and it appeared to me to combine the advantages of both systems.

I firmly believe that with regard to many of the subjects of dispute between Christians they often mean the same thing. I was much struck just now with an instance of this. I suppose there is no body of dissenters who would more strongly deny "sacramental grace" than the exclusive brethren. They would any of them absolutely reject such a doctrine. And yet in the tract I have before quoted I find a distinct admission that we are *recipients* at the Lord's Table : for I read that if a Christian takes his place there with-

out a certain measure of intelligence "he gets but little blessing for his own soul," &c., &c.

And so it is perpetually. We separate from each other too often because we have different modes of expressing the same truth.

I was grieved to hear, lately, a dear friend of mine,—one too belonging to those "brethren" who are distinguished as being *not* "exclusive;" and who has been eminently blessed of God in his work;—warning his converts most solemnly against ever joining in breaking bread any Christians who belonged to what he described as "systems," by which he meant the denominational bodies. He is a man in other things deeply taught of God; and his converts are also very advanced Christians.

To hear this teaching from such a man, as if too it were a first principle of godliness, was very painful to me.

I spoke to him about it afterwards, and he told me he never could communicate himself in any other way than his own, although he will gladly join all Christians in worship; and therefore he felt it right so to charge his converts. He considers himself to be set free from every "system;" but it appears to me that by this exclusiveness he is setting up another. The

reasons he gave me were these three, and no more. And as these are I suppose the same reasons that prevent other "brethren" from ever communicating with any of their fellow-Christians, except at their own meetings; I will mention them.

The first was, that the minister at a church or chapel, took Christ's place at the table, at which all the assembled Christians should be on an equality. That if he, as a stranger, were to go to a chapel, and sit down in the minister's chair, he would be turned out or considered a madman.

The next was that all sorts of wicked people were admitted into communion, adulterers, liars, &c., &c.

And lastly that the bread, instead of being one whole loaf, broken, was cut up into little bits.

Now these scruples seemed to me unworthy of the Cause, and of the man. To my mind, two of the three are mere trivialities; and the second a mis-statement.

My answer to his first grievance, as far as I remember, was this. That virtually, he himself acted the part of minister, at his own meeting. I have attended there hundreds of times, to my very great refreshment and profit, but I have never seen any one but himself (except when he is away) break the bread, nor speak

at the table. He said any of the men there might do so if they liked.* But they do *not* like ; for the fact is, their own instinctive sense of decency and propriety, takes the place of rule amongst them, but comes actually to the same thing. The name of "minister" would be eschewed by them, but it is very touching to hear these rough men speak of him as their "father," which he is ; and as such they all feel that he is right when he takes the place of authority amongst them. And I know nothing is farther from the thoughts of any of them, than to dispute his right to it. The reason of all this is that the Holy Ghost Himself, Who is the God of Order and Peace, rules that meeting.

My friend is, in fact, the minister of that place, and the God-appointed minister too, I firmly believe, much as he would repudiate the title.

It is a small, quiet, little country gathering ; where all can be done in a homely, simple manner ; and all are friends together. How much more then, is it

* Since writing this I have again attended one of their meetings, and for the first time this rule has been broken in my presence. One of my friend's earliest converts, who has been a Christian a great many years and is himself a preacher, broke the bread &c. I do not think myself that this exception does otherwise than prove the rule, but I mention it lest any one should be of a contrary opinion.

necessary when a large congregation meet, and require both Gospel preaching and Christian edification ; that "everything" should be "done decently and in order." If a man walked in, and seated himself, as my friend proposed, in the minister's chair, he could hardly be offended if he *were* treated as a lunatic ! He would not behave in such an unseemly manner in my house ; and why should he desire (theoretically, he would no more *do* it, than I should,) to take such a liberty in a place set apart for the worship of God !

I explained to him that all Evangelical ministers would repudiate, as earnestly as he could do, the notion that they were in any way a class apart from the other communicants. But this did not satisfy him.

As to his second statement. It is altogether a misrepresentation. He says there is one thing he *could not* do, and that is sit down with an unconverted person at the Lord's table. But alas ! I have not the least doubt he has done it many times. I believe he is doing it at this very time every Sunday. I know there is a woman in communion there, that he and I both instinctively feel is a false professor. I am sure he believes she is. But we cannot *convict* her of any deliberate sin ; nor can we read her heart—and therefore he wisely leaves her in *God's* hands,

and allows her to take the place *she says* is hers, at His table.

Now this is precisely what every conscientious minister does, or at any rate should do. That carelessness has prevailed, is no argument against the pastoral system. Certainly, in some communions, more attention would be directed, by the minister to what a person *did*; and in others, more to what he *said*, as evidences of his Christianity; but this is of small importance; as we all know how unclearly ignorant Christians can express themselves, and how well some mere professors can talk. In all doubtful cases God only can be the Judge; and a person's presenting himself at the communion-table, should be considered a sufficient indication that he is, what he thereby professes himself, a Christian.

But if a minister knows to the contrary—if he *is sure* a man is holding heresy, or living in sin, his duty is plain; and I do not believe that any Christian minister would neglect it. See how nobly the High Church clergy stood out against inter-communion with Socinians, when at the time of the commencement of the labours of the Revision Committee, it was proposed that they should all communicate together. And no even unconverted clergyman would, I believe, in these

days, *knowingly* receive into communion a man living in acknowledged sin.

And then, my friend's last objection, as to the bread not being "broken," must be considered. I admit willingly, that His way is the Scriptural way, but to make this of such overwhelming importance, is to lose sight of the fact (as the Baptists seem to do, by meeting in *that* name, rather than in Christ's—some excluding from their communion those not baptised by immersion as adults) that the *spiritual*, and not the *external* conditions are the main points. "Turn any arbitrary ritual in front, and make *it* the Divine," (even if we have Divine authority for the observance of it), "and you invert the truly Divine method. This always turns the spiritual and moral elements in front—faith, reason, charity; and the ritual follows. The spirit, in fact, dominates, the form serves." This is a fundamental law, the forgetting of which, has led to Phariseism of every kind.

Still, we must walk as strictly obedient children; only obedient in spirit rather than in letter, where no command is laid down. For the "Do this," surely cannot be supposed to refer to every detail of the ceremonial! I think that if our dear Lord were here, He would say to us—Do not let these trifles alienate

you from each other. And I am sure S. Paul would say, as he did so vehemently to Titus—"This is a faithful saying, and *these things* I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be *careful* to maintain *good works*. *These* things are good and profitable unto men. But avoid *foolish questions*, and genealogies, and *contentions*, and *strivings about the law* ; for *they* are *unprofitable and vain*."

TRIVIALITIES.

EVEN in a religion like ours, which deals with facts of such enormous magnitude, innumerable trivialities have been introduced. And if not openly contested for, there is still a quiet obstinacy about the using or not using of them, which it requires much grace in the bystander, if not himself a party man, not to be exasperated at.

This is true of all the Shibboleths. But I propose, truly humbling as I feel the task to be—to enter into the consideration of some of them.

Is it not a fact—humiliating doubtless—but still a fact—that the colour of a man's gown has often been considered of more importance than the truth or falsehood of the statements he makes when he has it on? I believe there are still many people who would swallow anything a clergyman said in a white gown, who would really not take the trouble to pay any attention to what he might say in a black one. Or vice versâ : but *this* not so frequently ; because as a *rule* the advocates of the *black* gown are keener and

more intelligent theologians than the other class, and more fond of sermons.

Whilst millions of souls are perishing around us for want of understanding and accepting the Gospel of Christ, and thousands of preachers are ignoring it altogether, *these*, and such like, are the mighty offences which raise such indignation in the religious breast !

The question of "black or white?" being made of such vast importance, I suppose I ought not to pass it over ; although I confess I have hardly the patience to enter into it ; nor am I sufficiently well informed on all the *pros* and *cons*, to do the subject justice. To my mind, however, it does appear that the Protestant party in the Church of England would act with greater Christian dignity if they at once cast aside the black gown to which they cling as to life itself ; as the use of it *is now*, beyond all question, the mark of a party, whilst that of the surplice is no longer so ; and some of the bishops have even requested their clergy to preach in their surplices.

The surplice certainly looks better, and is cleaner and cheaper, whilst it also makes unnecessary that changing of attire between the parts of the service, which is more suitable to a theatrical performance, than to the worship of God ; and to thinking minds of

at all a frivolous turn, must always appear more or less ridiculous.

I suppose, however, that there must be some principle involved in it, although I am ignorant of what that principle is. Still, I think I am right in believing that the chief Protestant objection to the use of the surplice in the pulpit (though strange to say not otherwise) is, that it is supposed by the Ritualists to be symbolical of *something*—I trust my readers will pardon my gross ignorance, but I really forget at this moment of *what*! I think also I have heard it stated that it too much resembles the dress of Aaron. But this it requires some ingenuity to discover. For anything *less* like it is difficult to conceive. Let any one read the description of Aaron's gorgeous and elaborate vestments in Exodus xxviii., and surely he cannot honestly say that they resemble the simple black cassock, and white surplice of the English clergy. I know what is said about "the thin end of the wedge," and how soon it will be proposed to them that they should wear all sorts of vestments. I can only answer that it will be time enough to refuse to do so when the proposal is made. It may also be said that when the High Priest went into the Holy of Holies, on the Day of Atonement, He was clothed all in white linen;

but one might have concluded that therefore the Low Church clergy would have made a point of not dressing in white at the celebration of Holy Communion,—but not at all so. It is solely in the *pulpit* they refuse to wear the surplice, and go to change their gown for the third time, and put on the "Aaronic garment" at the very moment, when one might have in some measure excused them for fearing that this might imply a *priestly* act.

A book has lately been published, written by a lady, on Church questions, and intended for girls. From a review I have read of it in an Evangelical (Church of England) magazine, edited by a well-known clergyman, on the principles of which I can entirely depend, I am sure it must be a very foolish one—though I trust not as "seductive and dangerous" as the reviewer believes. But the alarm and indignation he expresses as to her misrepresentations of the important historical fact—the *origin of the black gown*, I can hardly share—"The book is the more dangerous because there is nothing in the very early part to create alarm, or to put the reader on his guard. We need do no more than quote one single sentence from the chapter on symbolism, after affirming that the black gown was 'derived at the Reformation from Reformers at Geneva,'—a statement

which is utterly and notoriously false, and which betrays either criminal ignorance, or equally criminal indifference to truth . . .” I trust indeed he will be more merciful to me if I should make a blunder on this all-important point. But *is* it of more importance to ascertain who started *this*, than any other fashion in dress? I have at least admitted my ignorance. I hope it is not “criminal”!

Would it be permitted to me to suggest that the Evangelical clergy should also announce their dress to be “symbolical,” and standing in their pulpits in their white surplices should proclaim that “white linen is the righteousness of saints”—even “the righteousness of God, which is unto all, and upon all them that believe,” and that unless clothed in that righteousness, and made “whiter than snow,” they should not dare stand to offer salvation to their fellow-sinners?

And those also whose choir wear the same dress; how forcibly they might appeal to them as to whether, although clothed in white raiment, they had on that righteousness which alone could truly clothe them in God’s sight, and make them fit to appear in His presence? How they could also warn them against hypocrisy—against being “like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but

are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness."

Not long since I heard a lady, a Christian, I firmly believe, give as the reason why she had left the church which she had attended for years, that the choir had been put into surplices. She may have had other reasons, but this is the only one she thought it necessary to give. Another person present, in commendation of the step she had taken, then told us, how a very earnest Evangelical clergyman, lately come to a large town church, had told his choir boys, that the only singing pleasing to God was that which came from the heart, and was the fruit of the Spirit, and that if their praise was only lip-worship, he, for one, would rather be without it. Thank God for such a faithful minister ! *But* it was confidently assumed by the person telling the story, (and therefore did she tell it) that it was quite impossible that a true heart could beat beneath a surplice. Now I utterly fail to see why true spiritual worship should be expected from unsurpliced, rather than from surpliced singers.

I have been told two or three times by Christian low church clergymen, that they themselves would prefer preaching in their surplices ; but "*whatever would my congregation do !*" said one of them ; whilst

another solved the problem by declaring his belief that every one of them would walk out of church ! If this is really the state of the case, it is more the fault of the laity than the clergy, that such prejudice prevails. Unless indeed we may guess that the spiritual food they have received has not been of a very strengthening character—rather milk, than strong meat. In the last case I referred to, however, this was certainly not the case, and anomalous as it is, it frequently happens that amongst the most deeply taught Christians there exist some of the narrowest and pettiest prejudices. So active and ingenious is he who is for ever “sowing discord among brethren.” I have known others entirely indifferent to Gospel truth, who have left their church because, and *only* because the Psalms were chanted in it. Now I am very far from contending for a musical service. I know too well the evils which necessarily accompany it. But this I do so say, that it is an appalling state of things, that when Eternal Realities of overwhelming importance are concerned, *these* should be the trivialities with which we have to deal ! I feel I owe an apology to my spiritual readers for having led them into such absurdities—though we cannot call things absurdities, which are ruining multitudes of souls, and causing divisions among the saints.

Is it a wonder that a poor, surface, trivial Christianity should be the result? One in which the very first fruit of the Spirit, and the root and ground of the faith—Love—should be ignored! Do any rationalists question Satan's existence? Here I think is a proof of his power! Men and women with eternal destinies hanging in the balance, and yet turning the very Religion of Christ into a plaything!

And how many more causes of offence are there in the Church, which surely might be left to individual judgment, not to say taste, to decide on. For there are no rules laid down about them, and in many more of these questions than we think, is it a mere matter of taste. Some persons have very strongly, what others are entirely devoid of, a natural faculty which instinctively discerns the fitting. How we see this in the matter of dress. How much has been said and written about women's dress, and rules laid down how Christian women should attire themselves. When really the cause of most of what is called "inconsistency" in dress, is simply that this natural taste or instinct is wanting, and I am not aware that anything can give it. We see a humble earnest Christian woman perhaps vulgarly and finely dressed, and perfectly unconscious of it, whilst a thoroughly worldly

one would be dressed quite suitably to the occasion, just because one has good taste and the other is devoid of it.

So with other things. When this instinctive sense of the fitting, is accompanied by the love of the beautiful, and of music, it will find expression in the worship of God, in a very different manner to the feelings of such persons as are not possessed of it. It may be objected that worship is the act of the Holy Ghost in us, and therefore will maintain the same characteristics in all true worshippers. So it will ; but in very different modes. The Holy Ghost works through us ; not apart from us. And working in, and through us, He condescends to use our natural gifts and graces, our talents, and our idiosyncracies. And therefore is there as much diversity in His Spiritual, as in His Natural World. The very truths of the Gospel, and even a man's recognition of the character of God, do not come alike to each. "With the merciful Thou wilt show Thyself merciful ; with an upright man Thou wilt show Thyself upright ; with the pure Thou wilt show Thyself pure ; and with the froward Thou wilt show Thyself froward." And thus also, to a man of an ardently æsthetic temperament, will the Religion of Jesus come with a *Beauty*, the expression of which,

others may term sentimental. And no doubt this temperament has its own peculiar temptations ; but so has every temperament ; and our Father is our Creator, and He knows every peculiarity of disposition, and the keenness of every susceptibility : and He does not expect, whatever our fellow-creatures may do, a dull uniformity in His New Creation.

If we could but bring ourselves to see this, and allow for a great difference in the natural constitution of every Christian ; and believe that grace does not bring us all to one level, but flows in very different channels ; it would account to us for a great deal of the not seeing eye to eye on matters which are really trivial. And this lesson our differences may teach us, that where we cannot fully understand each other we can *love*. And love suffereth long, and "is kind ; . . . seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil." To descend to popular language : love will be always ready to give in. If this—the first work of the Spirit, were more earnestly sought in prayer, and more cultivated, and each were more ready to give in, in things non-essential—what a different people Christians would be !

Ugliness is an essential feature of the religion of many Englishman. Having no idea of the beautiful

themselves, it may be, they can afford to despise it in others: or more rarely, having it keenly, they are afraid of its proving a snare to them. Thus in the case of the Puritans the reaction from a sensuous ceremonial inclined them to destroy, as they did so ruthlessly, the architectural beauties of the churches. In their worship also, a stern, undeviating contempt for the æsthetic was a marked feature. They were, as many Christians are now, afraid of allowing its entrance into their worship in any way. But this fear is rapidly giving place in the Nonconformist bodies, especially the Congregational, to the very opposite principle, some of the most beautiful modern churches having been erected by them, whilst their service is frequently, not only liturgical, but to a great extent choral.

I see no reason myself why a building which is set apart—consecrated—dedicated (it is all the same thing) to the worship of God, should not be as beautiful as we can make it, with due regard to the fact that there are other things more important, and therefore our money should first (as *good* stewards) be spent on them. The spread of the Gospel at home and abroad, and therefore the *multiplication* of buildings in which to preach it. Schools. The care of the poor, and

the sick—all these come first because God would put them first. We are living in a spiritual dispensation, in which there is no Divinely appointed ritual, and no Temple with its gorgeous appurtenances. As has often been observed there is no book of Leviticus for the New Testament. But "The *poor* we have always with us." And the commands are very plain—"Preach the Gospel to every creature"—Be "ready to communicate;"—"distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality." And so is the assurance, "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto Me."

"The Most High *dwelleth not* in temples made with hands;" "neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, seeing He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things." That must never be forgotten. And yet, it seems to me not only reverent and seemly, but as it were, a token of affection towards our Father Who has given *us* "all things richly to enjoy," to make the place where Jesus meets with His children, and where the Holy Ghost works, as beautiful as we can, consistently with not neglecting things more important. This I think is reasonable, although we know that as King David said to the Lord, after his preparations were finished for the building of the

Temple—and as Mr. Sidney Herbert has written so pathetically within the entrance of his church at Wilton,—“All things come of Thee ; and of Thine own have we given Thee.”

I cannot however leave this part of the subject without adding that Ritualism to be of any value or significance must be of God's ordaining, not man's. Everything connected with the Tabernacle and its services was ordered by Almighty God for a purpose of His own. Probably each particular was strictly typical of some aspect of the work of Christ, or of the Glory of His Person, and was therefore to be jealously observed. No symbolism was left to man's imagination, but all, down to the pattern on the bordering of the priestly vestments, was laid down, and minutely described to Moses ; to whom the Lord gave commandment—“Look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount.”

To David again “patterns” were given “by the Spirit” with equal exactness for the construction and furniture of the Temple : and interference with these Appointments was reckoned as the most daring impiety ; as we see in the case of Ahaz, and of Uzziah, and in the judgments which fell upon them. It is obvious that modern Ritualism stands on another

footing, being devoid of Divine authority, or even sanction. Yet some symbolising is practised by all of us—even when not ordained as in the Sacraments. Thus we kneel in prayer to shew the humility and reverence with which we should come before God—and we stand to praise, because He has lifted us up.

There can be no doubt that an elaborate ceremonial has always marked the expiring life of the Church. It is a seeking to make up in externals what is lacking, and consciously lacking, in actual spiritual life. So let us beware of it. But at the same time we need not give way to the weakness that has possessed some minds of seeing the "mark of the beast" in every observance not precisely according to their own ideal.

Instead of that, we should be glad that God is worshipped, and His Truth proclaimed in all sorts of different modes, so that everybody's natural tastes and tendencies (which are by no means to be treated with contempt—for by "natural" I do not mean *sinful*) can be suited. Only, for a Christian to consult first his taste, rather than have regard to the value of the teaching, in his selection of a place of worship, is absolutely sinful. This absurd fastidiousness in trifles, and neglect of essentials is the cause of much of the leanness of soul amongst us.

It has been objected by some Christians to the use of a form of worship, that the fact of all true prayer,—and surely they would include praise?—being inspired by the Holy Ghost, precludes the use of a *form* of prayer at any time ; and yet they themselves invariably use a form of *praise*, and sing written hymns, in which they address God. There is an attempt to answer this in some of their books, but it is wholly unsatisfactory to my own mind.

One or two more party forms I must allude to, and then I will leave this part of the subject—to my great satisfaction.

To bow at the Name of Jesus is considered, and fairly considered, as the sign of a party in the Church of England. And it has always been to me most painful that our expression of love for that Name which is above every name, should even be perverted by Satan into a party sign. Although sympathising with those Christians who do thus bow, I will mention that I seldom do it myself. To me, there is in this, as in many similar practices, a want of reality. I do not for a moment insinuate that this is so in the case of the *Christians* who adopt them. But I do not feel it to be a genuine expression of my own feeling. Nor do I understand why more *reverence* is owing to the Name

of *Jesus* (dear as it is to us) than to that of *God*—or *Christ*. It is done no doubt from the idea (which our translation favours) that in Phil. ii. 10, a command to bow at the Name of Jesus is given ; but this is founded on an erroneous translation. It would be better translated, as every Greek scholar knows, "*in*," (not "*at*") His Name that worship should be paid to God. But it was specially observed at one time in the church's history, as a protest against Arianism. Thus also it was then customary, and is so again now in some "advanced" churches, to bow at that clause of the creed "And was made Man."* This was no doubt very valuable at the time of the Arian heresy, and I for one should not venture to say that the protest has altogether lost its value in these days of covert Socinianism. But its power it must have lost to a great extent, as is proved by the fact that Socinians will themselves observe it—such a mere form has it become. I know several myself, holding these views, but they all go to church, and bow reverently in the Creed.

This is the case very often with forms ; once instinct with fresh life, they end by being mere lifeless acts—and then are they worth preserving ?

* For the same reason the custom was introduced of *standing up* when the Gospel is read.

I always feel that with regard to children, the value of early formed habits of reverence cannot be over-estimated : and no one can, I think, appreciate more than I do, the good effects of such a training.

But, to my mind, one thing is of still greater importance, and that is *truth*. Let us have truth at any price ! And with the thought of the inestimable value of this first principle present to my mind, I say, *I* could not teach a child to express itself either by word, or act, in a way above its own experience. We must begin with the *heart* : and though *we* cannot give converting grace, and produce the love of God in it ; yet we can instil religious principle, which I think is "the fear of God," which "is the beginning of wisdom." And then, if God gives His blessing, and the *heart* becomes His own, I would not seek to control its manifestations. If an outward gesture springs spontaneously from an inward feeling, let it so spring, and welcome, however singular or even grotesque it may appear to the cooler members of the community : but deliberately to *teach* these expressions seems to me a dangerous thing, and has a spice of unreality about it too. For whilst one so trained may be bowing the head at the Name of Jesus, his heart may be at enmity with Him, and he is growing up a hypocrite.

I think that every phase of such unreality should be avoided. I wonder how many of those who turn to the east, when they repeat the Creed, have any notion why they are doing it. Of all the uneducated persons I have asked, I never found one who could give an intelligible reply. Otherwise, the custom itself appears to me a most harmless one. In a letter which I possess, written about 25 years ago, by a High Church clergyman of those days; the custom is thus explained. "Turning to the East in the Creed, as in Prayer is decidedly *anti-popish*. It is a symbol always manifested in the devotion of the Early Church, as indicating the Church's continual expectation of her Lord's Coming. The Papists turn to the Altar, and bow to the Altar. We look *Eastward*, and so *beyond*."

Now if the eager expectation of the return of Jesus, instinctively prompts a longing look eastward, whilst the belief in His Coming is expressed; * who, having at heart the same "Blessed Hope," could find fault with such an expression? But when we *know* it is not so, when we are perfectly well aware that if He were to appear a large proportion of the persons so expressing themselves, would call upon the rocks and the hills to

* In the *Creed*—but not in the *Te Deum*. Why not?

hide them from His presence, the act becomes a ghastly piece of formality and hypocrisy. Unconsciously so, no doubt, and done from mere force of habit, or from a sense of its being the "correct thing"—but any way a gesture expressing an untruth. For even among the true saints of the High Church party the expectation of the Personal, Pre-millennial Advent of Christ is not held. Not held, I mean as a *rule*. I believe among the High Church Evangelicals it *is* beginning to be held. I speak by hearsay. I myself have never met a High Church man or woman holding it. It is no doubt the exception to the rule still, where it *is* held. And therefore that *this* should be the particular party who have inherited from the Early Church, who did hold it, the outward sign of it, is a strange anomaly. If *we* who believe this truth were to look eastward, (or S.S.E. rather, for "His feet shall stand in that Day upon the *Mount of Olives*") there would be some sense in it! But for those to do so who confuse the two resurrections, and merely think of Christ coming to "Judge the world;" whose belief on the subject is in fact expressed by Luther's Hymn—shews what an entire absence of reality there must be in the old custom now. For such an event as the Judgment of the dead, is never, nor could be "the Blessed Hope" of the Church.

In all such customs, however harmless in themselves, and although originally the expression of earnestly pious feeling, this danger of unreality is very great. And it is such an insidious evil; and has so entirely undermined the very foundations of Christianity, as of Judaism, that it cannot too carefully be guarded against.

Let us have done with all shams! and whatever we are, or are not, in God's Name let us be *real*. Let us remember the terrific "Woes" pronounced against those who had let the outward forms of their religion, dominate over the vital elements of it—till the whole was a corrupt mass ready for destruction!

If our feeling of longing desire for the Lord's Coming, is so intense that we are constrained by His Love to give it expression, let us do it by all means. But I would beseech those who *know* they are not ready to meet the Lord—"by the mercies of God"—and by His "*terrors*" I would "persuade" them not to make out of the very Coming of the Lord, a Pharisaical little game to play at in church. For Jesus really is coming. It is all *true*. Those early Christians whose expectation you are counterfeiting were really looking for One whom they knew and loved. One who will surely "come to take vengeance on them that know

not God, and who obey not the Gospel (not the Law—who obey not the *Gospel*) of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Some day you may actually see His Glory irradiating the Eastern sky. Oh! take Him for your Saviour *now*. For your religion, with all its performances, is nothing but rottenness, and will utterly fail you when you come to face the Realities which await us all.

But I know that these old customs are observed by many true-hearted Christians; and as for the rest, God is the Judge, not man.

And yet, when there is so little to be said for the observance of them, and so much to be said against it, I cannot but feel that the Christians who have been accustomed to the performance of these things without attaching any definite meaning to them, would do more wisely to give up what is an offence to so many of their brethren, and cannot be of any importance, except as adding to the divisions in the Church. Surely, every step might be taken, and every advance made on either side, that is practicable, towards an end so devoutly to be desired as the outward unity of the Church of God.

Much stress has been laid on what is considered by some a dangerous innovation in the internal arrangements of a church, viz., that the ten commandments,

once so prominently placed above the Communion Table, are being superseded by texts, or at any rate have lost their position, in new, or newly restored churches. This again is a singular instance of how extremes meet. It has been one of the stock objections to the Church of England by the "brethren" of all sorts, and by many more Evangelical dissenters, that the ten commandments were so conspicuous in the churches. The Law was put forward, it was argued, instead of the Gospel; and I confess I see justice in the remark, though to myself it is a matter of indifference whether they are there or not. To read them there *might* alarm a guilty conscience, although I much question whether (being such a mere piece of conventionalism) it has ever done so. I myself should have chosen other words of Scripture. But be this as it may, who is now removing them? Why, the High Church party. On what principle I know not, but I read a strong protest against the innovation made by an "Evangelical clergyman." He however gave no reasons for his dislike of the change, beyond the fact that it *was* a change, and as such, to be deprecated.

Another of his complaints was that the font had been removed to the church door. (I never remember seeing it anywhere else.) And the objection of the

“Evangelical clergyman” to this position was that it symbolised that baptism is the entrance into Christ’s Church. But is it not considered by almost all Evangelical Christians to *be* the entrance into the outward church? I always understood that that *was* the view of the ordinance as held by the advocates of infant baptism. What is it, according to the Low Church theory, if it is *not* that?

If so, then the font is well placed. But what struck me as most remarkable in reading the protest, was that it should be made by a man who is in the habit of saying every time he baptizes an infant, and saying several times too in the course of the service, that baptism *is* the entrance into the church. This is stated in the prayer-book as an indisputable fact, whether the word “church” be regarded as meaning the visible or the invisible church. And I should have supposed that if he thought that statement untrue, he should cease to hold his position in the Church of England, or at any rate, direct his efforts towards a revision of the prayer-book, rather than changing the position of the font.

Another “mark of a party,” is the display of the Cross. And what strikes one here as anomalous, is the fact, that as a rule, where the Cross has been most

exhibited, it has been the least preached. And that those who glory in the doctrines of it, seem to detest the sign.

So it has been with the outward marks of reverence at the Name of Jesus. They have been insisted on by those who have taught other ways of salvation than "faith in That Name;" whilst those to whom Jesus has been All in All—and the only Way, as well as the Truth and the Life, have noticed these gestures with contempt.

Poor human nature ! With *such* a Saviour as Jesus Christ, it yet holds in greater esteem the actual bit of wood on which He died, or the form of it, than Himself, and the value of His "inestimable Death." Or having by faith grasped these realities, instead of being thereby humbled to the very dust, it too often becomes proud, and sits in severe and sarcastic judgment upon those who though possessed of less light, may still have more *grace*, and may be clinging with a true faith, though through the mists of legality and superstition, to the Cross of Christ.

Is a love of the sign of the cross as the world-wide symbol of the faith altogether incompatible with the knowledge and appreciation of what God has by the Cross wrought for us? I think not; though it is a

matter of feeling which it would be vain to argue about. But this I must say, that to *wear* a cross is to me highly objectionable. I cannot imagine how any one realising what it *is*, and who loves Jesus, *could* wear it as an ornament. If one dearer to me than all the world besides, had been unjustly taken by wicked men and hanged as a malefactor ; could I go flaunting about with a small model of a *gallows*, made of gold, and ornamented with jewels, as a sort of mixed memento and adornment ! Only it happened 1800 years ago—and the cross is such a pretty shape, and looks so nice—and *that* makes the difference ! But oh ! think of it. It is an instrument of torture, on which they nailed Jesus, and on which He died in agonies. *Think* of that—and surely if you love Him you will never wear *that* ornament any more. Then to wear it as a sort of religious profession is not much better ; for it is the holy conduct and influence of a Christian that should be the badge of his profession. To display the outward sign of our religion upon our own persons as the Pharisees did by their phylacteries, and borders of their garments, was so severely condemned by our Lord, that we should shrink from an approach to it. Nor, in these days, when the sign has for so many ages been utterly prostituted, is it the

least sign of anything, except the one thing that the wearer has never seriously considered what the Cross of Christ is, nor what His Death has done. We are called to *bear*, not to *wear* the Cross.

In a place of worship it is quite different, and on a Christian's grave nothing can be more beautiful. And there are other suitable and reverent ways of introducing it. For my own part I cannot understand how any Christian can fail to love the symbol of our faith—and all the *more* that it is "Popish;" for in it we see the outward sign of almost the only truth which amidst our miserable differences the whole Church still holds in common—the one sublime fact of Atonement through which we are united in one Body. Can any Christian have come suddenly, upon a large cross on some mountain pass in a Catholic country, and misunderstand me when I speak of the sight causing a thrill of thankful and tearful emotion not easily to be described?

But the *empty* Cross is the true symbol of our faith, for that reminds us of a *finished* Work, and a *Risen* Saviour. But let the sign not be a substitute for the thing signified, else it becomes a mere deception.

The habit of crossing oneself appears to me so entirely senseless, that I cannot enter into it.

The custom of observing saints' days, and other days of commemoration, has been made a bone of contention, in spite of S. Paul having so conclusively settled the question in Rom. xiv. 5, 6 : saying, in as plain language as a man could use, that it was to be left to the individual feeling and conscience of every Christian.

The High Church clergyman, whose letter of twenty-five years ago, I quoted before, adds—in defence of the observance of saint's-days—

“Surely our spiritual feelings of family union may have the same notes of happiness as our natural feelings of family association?” I should have thought so certainly. But the converse is equally important. If you prefer not observing these days, you are not to be forced into the observance of them, or condemned for your non-observance of them by me.

I think I have said enough to indicate what I mean by religious trivialities. To some it may be, the trifles I have named may appear very important. And if they were to be judged by the conspicuous place they hold in the controversies of the day, they would be so. It is only when contrasted with the *essentials* of Christianity that they become less and worse than trifles.

If we the least appreciated the danger of uncon-

verted sinners, or had the love of God really shed abroad in our hearts, would we take into serious consideration whether we preached to the ungodly, or worshipped with the saints, in a barn, or in the most glorious Cathedral ever built? Outward things *have* a value, but *comparatively* they are to be accounted "*dung* that we may win Christ." Let our powers of mind be concentrated on the cardinal truths of the faith; and then we should infinitely prefer to hear the truth of God preached in a theatre, than lies preached in His Name, or even a mixture of truth and falsehood, in a church. Then we should never hesitate between worshipping, and communicating with our brethren who know and love God, and can worship Him in spirit and in truth; in any miserable ugly place, with discordant singing, and rules of grammar unknown and uncared for—and joining a worldly congregation in a Gothic building, where we may enjoy exquisite music, and all the attractive etceteras that a refined taste can suggest; combined with the knowledge that there the first principles of Christianity are not recognised as the basis of the teaching.

One would suppose that if we accepted the main points of the Gospel as facts, this must follow. Yet in the mournful history of the Church of God, we see

that it has been far otherwise ; owing to the power and malice of the enemy who is for ever throwing dust in the eyes of the unwary, and providing them with instructors who "teach for doctrine the commandments of men."

Such is the marvellous hold that things of even less importance than those I have named, have taken on the minds of men, that in the days preceding the English Reformation, when it was considered an unmistakeable sign of being a "Gospeller" to say "*the* Lord," when speaking of Jesus Christ, rather than "*our* Lord;" there were numbers who would persist in saying "*the* Lord," actually at the risk of their lives. And this, at a time, when surely, if ever, men were in earnest, and contending for the most important elements of the faith. It seems to be a natural characteristic of some minds, to love to make a protest, and if martyrdom fell to the share of such, one would feel that even here they had met their reward. It must, I imagine, be something of this spirit that invests with such importance all these religious puerilities.

My own theory is, I confess—I only offer it for what it is worth—to make a thorough jumble of all the Shibboleths, and imitate each other's *harmless* practices ;

and the effect will be that people will no longer be able so satisfactorily to themselves to *classify* us; but will *have to think*, and in some measure to discriminate between the different statements they hear made.

As it is, giving a *name* to the different Christian parties, completely satisfies those who are indifferent about their own souls. If you do not give them any opportunity of thus classifying you, they feel themselves to be in a measure frustrated. How often have I thus been reminded of the vulgar proverb as to the fatality to a dog's success in life, of giving him a "bad name!" I have succeeded in really interesting a person in some preacher of the Gospel, and he has agreed to go and hear him: but on a third person coming in, and whispering the magic words—"the very Low Church party, you know"—I have seen every gleam of interest die out of his countenance, and having "found out now" what I am, or am in his estimation, I feel that nothing farther that I could say would receive any attention.

When an unconverted man says "Oh, I know *all about* So and so; he is High Church;" or, "he has very peculiar views," or "he believes in 'conversion';" I feel my faith very weak as regards any hope of him. If he has systematised the Christian parties, he appears

to feel that he has amply performed his religious duties. The qualifications that he requires in his own spiritual guide, are usually comprehended in the phrase, "a good churchman—you know—and no nonsense about him." An intelligent heathen might innocently wonder whether the word "good" so applied, was to be understood as meaning "pious;" and what the "nonsense" could be from which he was so happily delivered. But this would be because he is not aware that these terms, vague as they may appear to him, also describe a distinct party, and thus are by the initiated perfectly understood and appreciated.

It has always appeared to me that if a preacher has a definite idea in his own mind of what he means, he may trust quite sufficiently to *words* to make himself understood, without the aid of party practices. I think that not many members of any congregation would fail to understand what Mr. Ryle meant, even if he preached in a surplice; or Archdeacon Denison, if he were to announce his views in a black gown.

But I have said enough, and more than enough on these topics—and will conclude in better words than mine, giving first a passage from a sermon preached in Westminster Abbey, during the recent London Mis-

sion, by Dr. Butler, the Head Master of Harrow ; and then an extract from an Address to Sunday School teachers, by the Rev. W. H. M. H. Aitken.

"In proportion as we find our hearts fixing themselves on ordinances, instead of on God Himself ; in proportion as we are thrilled by the emotions excited by religious rites rather than by God's justice, God's truth, God's faithfulness, God's consolation ; in proportion as we lean on human counsel and saintliness, instead of on Christ and His Spirit, in that proportion are we idolators. We are not, perhaps, worshipping that which man's fingers have made, but we are taking as a standard that which was made by man—perhaps by man at his best, but which is not divine."

". . . Let us not be too hasty in concluding that we are possessed of all the truth, or even of a considerable part of it. Above all, let us be diffident of our own judgment, and ready to learn from all, seeking the truth in all humility upon our knees ; buying it at the price of much earnest effort and wrestling prayer, and, it may be, personal sacrifice, but selling it not, however heavy its price may seem. Prov. xxiii. 23. So shall we be educated and guided into all truth. Let us lay to heart S. Paul's manly words upon the unprofitableness of mere word-battlings and frivolous disputations.

Believe me, dear Christian friends, three-fourths of the controversies of this most wise age are little more than word-fights : men struggle for their wretched Shibboleths as for dear life itself, whereas if they would just be silent and *think*, they would find themselves much nearer each other than they dream as regards the thing signified. Seek to be taught of God, and teach up to the point that you have learnt, so shall you communicate more truth, and less mere theory and barren orthodoxy than is common."

ESSENTIALS.

WE have seen that in the Christian Religion there are essential truths, to which the Church of God owes her existence; and that added to these essentials there are multitudes of subordinate things of more or less importance which have gathered round them; some of them valuable, others, the veriest rubbish, no more than just the accumulated dust of ages of theology. All these accumulations great and small, are the gold, silver, and precious stones, or the wood, hay, and stubble, which have been laid on the One Foundation. Now in the efforts which have been made by Christians to sweep away the dust and rubbish, too often they have not been careful to preserve what has been of more or less value, but I think more often in the Reforms that have been made, a good deal of the rubbish has been too much respected, and left to be the nucleus round which fresh errors have gathered. Taking these things into consideration, it is no wonder that the "latter days" are "perilous" ones, and days in which all kinds of error prevail. These errors have

well nigh eaten out the life of many branches of the outward church. Can it not be said of some portions of God's heritage, as of Israel of old?—" *Many pastors have destroyed My vineyard, they have trodden My pasture under foot, they have made My pleasant portion a desolate wilderness. They have made it desolate, and being desolate it mourneth unto Me; the whole land is made desolate, because no man layeth it to heart.*"

To raise herself from this degradation, and to meet these dangers, the Church must be *strong*. And to be strong, she must be *united*. True, that whether visibly united or not, she is One Body, and being inhabited by One Spirit no attacks from without, or from within, or from below, can prevail against her to destroy her. "No weapon that is formed against her can prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against her in judgment she shall condemn—because their righteousness is of Me, saith the Lord." But bare existence will surely not satisfy her whom "God hath purchased with His own Blood." It is not sufficient that her enemies shall not prosper—that were small cause of rejoicing. *She* must prosper. She wishes to embrace those enemies, to have them also reconciled to the God against Whom she too has sinned so deeply, so

heinously ; against such Love, against such a knowledge of It, against such sufficiency of grace. She is awakening to a sense of her sins. She "remembers her own evil ways, and her doings that were not good ; she loathes herself for her iniquities and her abominations." She remembers her sloth, her adulteries ; she knows that "*therefore* the showers have been withholden," (see Jer. iii. 3)—the "showers of blessing" which she had been promised. She is at last desiring that her Lord should be fully glorified in her ;—that she should be indeed "the glory of Christ." And is she not arising—is she not "coming to herself"—and saying, "I will return unto my first husband, for then was it better with me than now"? Thank God ! there are signs of this. What else means the desire after holiness that so pervades the Church? What else is the marked separation from the world? Not from this and that amusement, as it used to be, (just a legality and no more) but with now perhaps *more* rather than *less* of—shall I call it—geniality? for want of a better word—there is yet a much greater separation in *spirit* and in *interests*, from "the world that lieth in wickedness."

I trust we are not deceived—but I know we all feel that it is so, and of this too we begin to be convinced,

that a true Revival of godliness must begin in our own hearts, and a real consecration to God of the members of the true Body of Christ *must precede* the enlargement of that Body. *We must return*, (not only think and talk about it) to Christ, and then indeed will it be better for us than now !

We know how He will receive us. "They say, If a *man* put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man's shall he return unto her again ? . . . But *thou* hast played the harlot with many lovers ; *yet return again to Me*, saith the Lord."

But to return to our "first love," we must necessarily put away the evil from amongst us. The love of the world has been one crying evil in the Church, but I do verily believe not the greatest. We have cast off all *family affection*, and *therefore* have we placed our affections on the things and people of the world. The Church has, though One Body, been rent by schisms, and has so entirely ceased to recognise Her Unity that this truth is now hardly believed to be a fact. Nay, by many of her members it is absolutely denied. She is, blessed be God, awaking from her deadly sleep. She is enlarging her borders. But until she truly repents of this her greatest offence against her Lord, until she makes up her family quarrels, and

brings forth abundantly the first fruit of the Spirit—*love*, the "showers of blessings" will not be poured forth. "Go," our Lord is saying to each schismatic—"go, and be reconciled to thy brother, and *then* come and offer thy gift."

God has put it into the hearts of His people to yearn over lost sinners, as they have never done before in our days. We know how this finds expression in the "Mission" work, now become so usual in the Church. How marvellous (to our weak faith) is the awakening in the Church of England. Revival meetings have been more or less known in a very small section of it, and among the dissenters—but ten years ago, in our most ardently hopeful moments we could hardly have supposed that we could ever have seen such a Revival attempted as the recent London Mission, with three bishops at its head! And all over the country the same work is carried on, and at each of these missions God blesses His word.

But these are after all but the droppings of the shower. There are "signs of abundance of rain," and yet it falls not. In Scotland, and now in Ireland, to some degree, to a greater degree than we have any of us ever known it do, it *has fallen*. But the clouds are full of water; and we may surely ask without presumption, *why* the

Lord stays His Hand? And more than this, I believe the question may be *answered* without presumption also—because His children will not lay their quarrels at His feet. We may rejoice, as Paul did, that Christ is preached, even though it is “of envy and strife”—but the full blessing to our own souls, or to the poor perishing souls outside, cannot come till we love one another, not in *word* only, but in *deed* and in *truth*.

It is a most marked feature in the present Revival, that the blessing has been vouchsafed, at every place, exactly in proportion as the “love of Christ constrained” the Christians there, to sink their differences, and join together in the work. A letter in “The Christian” gave a striking instance of this. It was written in February 1874, just after Mr. Moody and Mr. Sankey, the American evangelists, whom God has been pleased to make the instruments of such blessing in Edinburgh, had left that city. The writer tells how before arriving there, they had been in York, and one or two other places, proclaiming the glad tidings of God; but that the sectarian prejudices of the Christians in those places prevented their co-operating together in the work. Therefore though there was some blessing granted, it did not appear very great.

“Next came Edinburgh where the union (of Chris-

tians) was an ecclesiastical prodigy, unexampled in modern church history. Like wax before the fire, sectarianism melted in the northern metropolis before the single-eyed and fervent ministry of the American evangelists. But if these wondrous gatherings day by day are, in the main, the effect of unity, who shall measure the guilt and shame of disunity? How many souls, humanly speaking, have already perished through the discord of the sects! Oh, for the love of Christ, and for the pity of souls, let us cry against all sectarianism, exclusiveness, and bigotry! Down with it, down with it, even unto the ground!"

Now if this union could be effected in Edinburgh, it certainly might be anywhere, for surely there can be no place where party feeling has run higher? Co-operation amongst the various Christian parties there may well be called an "ecclesiastical prodigy." And this, although the creed of all, is as far as I understand it, identical. But it is generally in these quarrels about nothing that the greatest bitterness exists. For when once a grievance has been established between Christians holding the same creed, what can heal the breach? No human power certainly, for *pride* is at the bottom of it. "*Only* by pride cometh contention," we are told. And the most hopeless of all contentions are

family quarrels. "A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city; and their contentions are like the bars of a castle." "The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water; therefore leave off contention before it be meddled with." But this rule has been neglected, and the family quarrels in the Church have indeed become as "the bars of a castle." But their strength is after all only pride, and there *is* a stronger force still—one "strong as death"—*love*; and strong as the pride may be, it can be all dissolved by the love of God shed abroad in the heart, and broken to pieces by His Word. "Nothing is too hard for the Lord;" "*He is able* to make all grace abound towards us;" and even in and by us can work this miracle, as He has proved in Edinburgh.

Whilst we are dishonouring God by our miserable disputes, souls are daily, hourly perishing round us. Does it ever occur to the Christian schismatics, that if by God's marvellous grace, they are permitted to be the instruments of rescuing some souls from destruction, yet they have been the murderers of many more? They have by their divisions and contentions been actually hindering God's work! May He forgive us all, and give us grace to do very differently for the future!

In all these contentions each party is to blame, though perhaps one side more than the other. But if the contending parties wait to make up their quarrel, until the exact proportion of blame has been duly estimated and admitted on both sides, they may wait for ever ; for never will any light be thrown on the question whilst they are walking in darkness, which they must be if they are not walking in love. We shall see whether in Edinburgh these difficulties will not be adjusted after the light has so gloriously shone there. I shall be surprised if at any rate the *bitterness* is not wholly removed from the hearts of all those who have joined in the work there, and we may be sure that they will have a rich blessing in their own souls.

In many places divisions have been made between Christians, on merely *personal* grounds. And this of course is a smaller and far more contemptible source of contention. I am acquainted with places where the few Christians are separated into two, or three, or even more different communities, to the grievous scandal in the Church, for really no reason at all. They agree absolutely in all the main points of their creed ; but perhaps some of them thought their minister dull, or in some measure unenlightened ; or there was some trivial offence given ; or, may be, they simply desired

a change ; so they left him ; and he perhaps shewed no very Christian spirit, nor his adherents. Then the separatists set up a meeting of their own, or a free church, and usually proceed to divide and sub-divide themselves, as their fancy or their pride dictates. One perhaps offends another ; and a third is a Diotrephes, wishing to have the pre-eminence ; and a fourth desires to hear himself speak, and is not appreciated ; and a fifth wishes the meeting to be conducted in this way ; and a sixth in that ; and it ends in ever so many different gatherings worshipping (?) in the same place, and the whole of them being held in just contempt by "them who are without." I know one place, with a population of 2000 or 3000, where there are nine different places of worship, *all* Evangelical.

Now a state of things like this is a grievous offence to God. It is just following the leadings of the flesh rather than the Spirit. These are the sins for which, in different forms the Church must humble herself before God, and from which she must cleanse herself before she can see the blessing she is hoping for.

I think that I am representing rightly the present state of the Church of God. And should it not indeed be with a sense of bitter shame that we look around upon the world that lieth in wickedness? Not only is

the creation groaning for deliverance, but our Lord is still mocked, and scorned, and crucified. And are we not to blame for these things? To us has been committed the "Power of God," but what have we done with it? Why has the Gospel not been victorious? "The Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save;" nor has He lost His "power to deliver;" "but our iniquities have separated between us and our God, and our sins have hid His face from us." And not only have we betrayed that trust, but we have done so whilst a greater Power (we might almost say) was within us—the Power that raised our Lord from the dead, and set Him at God's right hand in the Heavens. With this we could have done "all things." See Eph. i. 19, 20; iii. 20; 2 Cor. xiii. 4; Phil. iv. 13.

Such, indeed, is "the exceeding greatness of His Power to usward who believe," that we are even permitted by Almighty God to "hasten the Coming" of His Son: (see 2 Peter iii. 12—marg. :) and therefore may we not justly take to ourselves the blame of having retarded it?

If our long-suffering God indeed grants us true repentance, it will shew itself in results that are visible and unmistakeable, for the Holy Ghost ever

manifests His power by "*gathering together* in one the children of God that were scattered abroad."

We may learn a forcible lesson from 2 Sam. xix. When Absolom the usurper was dead, "all the people were at strife throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, the king saved us out of the hand of our enemies, and he delivered us out of the hand of the Philistines; and now he is fled out of the land for Absolom. And Absolom, whom we anointed over us, is dead in battle. Now, therefore, why speak ye not a word of bringing the king back !

"And King David sent to Zadok and to Abiathar the priests, saying, Speak unto the elders of Judah, saying, Why are ye the last to bring the king back to his house? seeing the speech of all Israel is come to the king, even to his house. *Ye`are my brethren, ye are my bones and my flesh:* wherefore then are ye the last to bring back the King? . . . *And he bowed the heart of all the men of Judah, even as the heart of one man; so that they sent this word unto the King, Return thou, and all thy servants. So the King returned, and came to Jordan.*"

Oh that our King may speak to our hearts in these pathetic words ! Is not His heart, more tender than David's, yearning over His brethren, and amidst "the

earnest expectation of the creation," does He not say to us, "Ye are my brethren, ye are my bones and my flesh; wherefore then are ye the last to bring back the King?" He is the same Jesus Who even during His Agony anticipated the day when He should declare His Father's Name unto His brethren, and sing praise unto Him in the midst of the Church.* The same Whose first act after He had burst the bands of death, was to send a message to His "brethren," proclaiming to them the fact of the new made relationship to the Father in which they now stood. And when He shall have "*bowed our hearts, as the heart of one man,*" then the cry of "the Spirit and the Bride" will arise with power—"Come Lord Jesus!" And He will "come quickly."

I shall always believe that one of the first harbingers of the present Revival, and one of the main causes of it, was the establishing, through the instrumentality of that beloved servant of God, Mr. Pennefather, of those blessed gatherings, the "Conferences," begun at Barnet, continued, and so vastly enlarged as to numbers, at Mildmay Park.

For what was the principle on which those large meet-

* See Ps. xxii. 22, as quoted in Heb. ii.

ings were convened? Let him tell it himself. "He often spoke of his earnest desire that he might be permitted to exhibit the great principle that the Union of God's true people is altogether above and independent of Church Government and denominational boundaries. That 'the blessed company of all faithful people' *must* and *do* love one another in Christ, and let the world see it."

And truly God granted him his desire. He was indeed permitted to shew this forth. His whole beautiful life was a continual testimony to the Power of Love. In the same letter I have just quoted, introduced into one of his funeral sermons; it is also said, "The jealousies and envyings so fearfully prevalent among Christians always stirred his gentle spirit to its very depth, and roused him into righteous indignation. Often has he been heard to say, 'Let them go and do so much work for their Master, that they will have no time for railing.'" Oh let us seek to be filled with the same spirit—to follow him as he followed Christ.

The Mildmay Conferences gave a blow to the sectarianism which was enslaving the Evangelical bodies, which please God it will never recover. At these gatherings it was *manifested* that the Church of God was one Body, and as such could worship the same

God, in the same Spirit. And farther, could join together in the Celebration of the Communion of the Body and Blood of her Lord. When these meetings were held at Barnet, the whole assembly used thus to communicate together, and none of us who were then present can ever forget the blessedness of those Communions.

And most happily do these Conferences retain their original character. I confess to having felt regret at the falling off in the number of communicants in late years—but in 1874 this deficiency was supplied by a Communion feast being held in the Large Hall, on the last day of the Conference, in the Presbyterian manner, at which about 2000 persons were present, At the Church the Lord's Supper was also celebrated as usual, at a different hour. Other similar Conferences are now held in various places. The Annual, and Daily, undenominational Prayer-meetings shew another advance in true Church Union which is very encouraging.

We cannot of course blind ourselves to the fact that there are many *discouragements*. One might indeed be sickened if one read the ignorant, unspiritual criticisms of the sectarian papers, on this movement, but one need *not* read them. All these things it is

better entirely to ignore where it is possible to do so. I was startled however, recently, to find how very active is that society which calls itself the English Church Union. Its object is I believe to facilitate the fusion of the Roman, Anglican, and Eastern churches. For this object its associates bind themselves to pray; and through the society the so-called "church" principles are spread in many ways; but I did not know that they were so zealously disseminated as *this*. I proposed to a poor woman that she should go to hear a Gospel address, given at a neighbouring school-room, by a clergyman of the church of England; but I found that as an associate of the E.C.U. she had been induced to sign a protest against "Mr. Cowper Temple's occasional sermons bill," and this she said made it impossible for her to hear preaching except in a church. I know no more of the "occasional sermons" bill, than its name, so I may be wrong; but I suppose that *virtually* the protest was against the command "Preach the Gospel to every creature." That any association contemplating the promotion of Church Union, should take *these* steps to accomplish it, is indeed strange! and that advantage should be taken of the ignorant, to prevent them, as in this case, from hearing the Gospel is a grievous error.

I have often wondered what is the ultimate end the E.C.U. sets before it as desirable with regard to dissenters. One hears of no union being prayed and striven for, except with the Roman and Greek churches. Do its associates pray for the dissenters? and if so *as what* are they regarded? as enemies? or brethren? or is there an intermediate position found for them? The "Union of Christendom" is said to be the object of their prayers, but does "Christendom" comprehend the Christian nonconformists? or are they left out in the cold altogether? I imagine they are not all agreed on this point. But even though this Association "protests" against Gospel preaching; no doubt it does so ignorantly; and I cannot but feel the deepest sympathy with its *intention*—"Church Union." May its members be taught to see what the "Church," and what "Union" *is*; and may their prayers be answered "exceeding abundantly above all that they can ask or think!"

But it is vain for any Christians to pray for what is so distinctly *doomed* as "Christendom," (by which term I include the whole mass of nominal Christianity, and thus, especially, the more important branches of it,) unless it were as Abraham prayed for Sodom and Gomorrah. To do so shews a want of apprehension

of the mind of God as revealed in such parables as that of the "tares," the "grain of mustard seed," "the leaven," and the "net;" and specially of the spiritual meaning of "*Babylon*," whose *end* leaves no room for *prayer*, beyond the petition that as quickly as may be, God's people may be called *out* of her. But we should remember that they are not yet all called out. The final judgment cannot fall on her till they are in safety. (Gen. xix. 22.)

Therefore, even though the Pope has declared his infallibility, we cannot say that as yet the spiritual Babylon has filled up the measure of her iniquities. She holds errors which make it manifestly impossible that we could join in her services, but Christian communion with individual members of her body we may perhaps hold, though the possibility of that rests with *them*. I think that if *they* are willing for it, we should be. I heard not long since of a Protestant praying extempore with a Roman Catholic priest, and the latter rising from his knees too deeply moved to be able to say good bye, but a warm pressure of the hand showed that he had felt it to be indeed *communion*.

Even now there are traces in the Roman Church, not yet obliterated, not only of Gospel truth—*that*, of course—one may thank God that the very display of

the crucifix shows that is still held, though no doubt obscurely—but of aspects of truth which Protestants as a rule have lost, and which we might with advantage learn from her.

And so it is with all the Christian sects. Some hold less, some more truth. With some it is less adulterated with error, with others it is more so. With some the truths held are more superficial; with others they are more profound. But I am fully persuaded that to each of these bodies has been committed some special aspect of the truth, and that *the Church of God has need of all these truths, and of every aspect of them*; and to possess the full sphere of truth, must take in all the Creeds, being taught by the Holy Ghost how "to refuse the evil, and choose the good." Therefore it is the duty of the wise Christian, who would grow in knowledge and in love, to learn from all; or rather from Him in Whom all Fulness dwells. Such an one could never be a party man. I believe that if a man could be Spirit-taught, as no one since Pentecost ever has been—and if trusting *wholly* to that teaching, and with the necessary talent and leisure, he gave himself up to the study of the Word of God, as the great object of his life, apart from all sectarian influences; he would arrive at the possession of so much truth (at first appearing con-

flicting, but eventually harmonious) as would utterly unfit him for exclusive communion with any of the Christian bodies ; simply because he would so entirely appreciate the truth held by them all. But for all this he might gladly avail himself of the outward organization of one of them.

The Church is "the pillar and ground of the truth ;" not any one section of it. The whole Church possesses,—I will not say the whole truth,—but all that God has so far seen it fit to reveal to man. And some of this truth remains even in communions from which we must needs separate ourselves, to obey the injunctions given in 2 Tim. ii. 20, 21, but even from thence we may gather it. Or rather I should say *recognise* it, for we should *gather* in far other Fields. But having learnt more or less truth, from the Source of all Truth, we should gladly recognise it wherever we find it, and make it the basis on which to establish as substantial a fellowship as it is broad enough to bear. True Christian fellowship, however, can only stand on one basis, the *doctrines of the Cross*. Apart from these there may, no doubt, be much to attract our human nature, but whatever teaching ignores the deep and fatal wound that nature has received, under-estimates sin, and therefore sees no need of God's remedy for

this—the Sacrifice of his Son—must, however much of other truth may be mixed with it, fall entirely, and fatally short of the very essentials of true Christianity. I speak of all forms of this most plausible, and therefore most dangerous teaching. Rationalism, Theism, Unitarianism, and alas the teaching of the majority of the "Broad Church" party, whether Church of England, Presbyterian, or Independent. And this teaching, though it "professes to be wise," yet commits the folly of supposing that a merely negative code of virtue can please God. It respects, though insufficiently, the "Thou shalt nots" of the law; but with the "Thou shalt" it has little or no concern. As it is the result of ignorance of the nature of *sin*, so it also leaves no place for *grace*. This is to my mind, far more than Popery, the religion of human nature. No doubt human nature has many varieties, but I am now speaking of what I confess to be my own natural religion. I can only too well understand the difficulties of believing *enough*, but deliberately to believe *too much* is a state of mind I can feel no sympathy with. However, Satan has shown himself to be fully able to supply a religion adapted to *every* natural bias.

Dora Greenwell, in one of her books, says what is most beautifully true on this subject:—"Belief in

Christianity as a historic certainty, and faith in Christianity as a living power, advance or recede together ; and it is interesting, though often sorrowful, to trace this even in the divisions of Christians, and to see how broad a line separates believers, *all* believers in the fulness of Divine revelation, from those to whom it is more or less consciously an offence and stumbling-stone. The Roman Catholic and the Calvinist, for instance, differ widely as to what we may call the machinery of grace ; they disagree as to the modes and channels by which it is conveyed to man ; they agree as to the reality of this gift on the part of God, as to the need of it on the part of man ; the hope, the confidence, the *life* of each is placed in the power of a superhuman influence, in the efficiency of a supernatural aid. . . . The belief in grace is the touch-stone which compels a sharp separation ; on one side are ranged all that have ever been strong for Christ—Apostles, Fathers, Doctors ; every deep heart unresting till it found rest in Him who made it for Himself ; every giant intellect which from age to age has bent and bowed itself beneath the yoke of Christ, and been made great through the loving connection of the Cross ; and with them too are ranged, how many, who have been weak in Christ, infirm in judgment, visionary,

superstitious, yet still *weak in Him*, holding Him by the hem of His garment, but even by that upholden. In the lives of such believers, even the humblest and weakest among them, I see a root that is entirely wanting elsewhere, the grasp upon an endless verity, 'the power of an endless life.' . . . Pantheism, Rationalism, and nominal Christianity are but so many denials of this power."

And again in "the Patience of Hope" she says—"The sober Christian may possibly feel a shock in finding Novalis describe his faith as a foe 'to art, to science, even to enjoyment;' yet does not his own daily experience prove that the holding of the one thing needful involves the letting go of many things lovely and desirable, and that in thought, as well as in action, he must go on ever narrowing his way, *avoiding much?* And this, not because his intellect is darkened to perceive beauty and excellence, or his affections dulled to embrace them, but because human life and human capacity are bounded things; the heart can be devoted but to *one* object, and the winning of the great prizes of earthly endeavour asks for an intensity of purpose, which in the Christian has found another centre.

"And more than this, the rule of Christ is not only

exclusive but restrictive, and though it would carry us among too wide and distant fields to enter upon this subject as it deserves, we need not look far into either literature or art to see to how many of their happiest energies this rule opposes itself. Their spirit is a free spirit impatient of any yoke. How much, for instance, of the greatness of Shakespeare and Goethe consists in a wide Naturalism, which as it were, finds room within it for all things, not only depicting them, but in some measure delighting in them *as they are*. Could this genial abandonment co-exist with a deepened moral consciousness, far less, surely, with the simplicity and severity of Christ? . . . Christianity, though it may at certain periods, and in certain persons, reveal itself under a splendid and engaging aspect, so as to command the homage of the world with which it is at variance, remains true to its first conditions, beginning at Bethlehem, 'small among the cities of Judah,' and ending upon Calvary between two thieves.

"There is a natural grandeur and completeness, which the soul, if it would have Christ formed within it, must be content to miss. And this because Christianity does not *as yet* take in the whole of man. . . . Yet how fair and exalted a thing, under its happier

conditions is natural life ! in its illusions, which are but truths *anticipated* in the clear second sight of the soul."

Now it is the freshness, naturalness, and geniality of the Broad Church party, and their keen appreciation of life, and of all that humanity has to offer, that makes their teaching so attractive. Their manliness, and absence of all ecclesiastical pedantry, and theological dogmatism is very charming, particularly to those who chafe against the restraints of the Christian yoke. For it is vain to deny that Christianity *being remedial* must, and does, altogether preclude the possibility of what is popularly meant by the phrase "making the best of both worlds." Could S. Paul, glorying "only in the Cross," glory also in the natural delights and resources of the world?—the world that *needed* Calvary! If we would take Christ's yoke upon us, and learn of Him, following Him as *disciples*, it must be on a path of humiliation, "bearing the Cross." "Whosoever forsaketh not all that he hath, cannot be My disciple." And though some take Him to be their Saviour, who never follow Him as disciples, they know that "He never trusts Himself to a divided heart," and they have no enjoyment in His service. Neither have they in the world. They have enough religion to spoil the world to them; to make them

thoroughly uncomfortable in the mundane society in which they mix—but of the solemn, and yet unutterable joys of true discipleship they know nothing.

For the unrestrained enjoyment of human life we must *wait* till “all things are made new.” There is no doubt that then all the joys which are repressed here will expand and luxuriate, and in the leisure of eternity what may not the intellect achieve?

“ And art Thou come with us to dwell,
Our Prince, our Guide, our Love, our Lord?
And is Thy Name Emanuel,
God present with His world restored?

* * * *

The heart is glad for Thee ! it knows
None now shall bid it err or mourn ;
And o'er its desert breaks the rose
In triumph o'er the grieving thorn.

Thou bringest all again ; with Thee
Is light, is space, is breadth, and room
For each thing fair, beloved, and free,
To have its hour of life and bloom.

Each heart's deep instinct unconfess'd ;
Each lowly wish, each daring claim ;
All, all that life hath long repress'd,
Unfolds undreading light or blame.”

And in the meantime Christ's kingdom is one of self-

renunciation, and of patience—"the world crucified unto us, and we unto the world."

A religion that offers a present enjoyment of the things which to humanity are so dear, naturally has many votaries. But oh! "*what* will it profit them—if they gain the whole world, and lose their own souls!"

For harsh, and cruel, and narrow minded as it must seem to those to whom "the preaching of the cross is foolishness," there *is* no other way of salvation than the acceptance of that which God has provided in the *Death* of His Son. And for that we must come to Him as utterly lost sinners, to be saved on no other grounds at all, than *as* sinners, and with no plea but His shed *Blood*.

Therefore union and communion with any who do not hold these fundamental truths are impossible for us. Gladly should we make allowance for those who have been bewildered by human teaching, and possess that hesitating order of mind which cannot help seeing the other side of everything, *and round the corner*, as it were, of every dogmatic statement, until they seem utterly incapable of holding any doctrine certainly. Some of these persons have plainly been Christians, with a truly Christ-like spirit, and through all their

doubts and questionings must have held to Him as their Saviour: but they made a great mistake in becoming teachers of others, some dogmatism being surely necessary in a teacher; whereas, what they instilled most effectually into the minds of their disciples was their own doubts.

But alas! the truth remains, that not only is "the preaching of the cross to them that perish *foolishness*," but the natural heart of man revolts at the doctrine of the Atonement. It cannot receive the principle of Vicarious suffering.

Many attempts to remove this antipathy have been made, by trying to reconcile the Atonement with our natural ideas of justice; but such reasoning has always been too shallow to satisfy any really thoughtful mind. The fact is that the *principle* on which "God can be *Just*," and yet "the *Justifier* of those that believe in Jesus" will never be understood by men in the present Dispensation. It has been urged that although it would have been unjust (and grossly so) to lay our sins on a perfectly innocent and holy Person, it became just because it was *God Himself* who came and bore them, and died for them, in the Person of Jesus Christ. But this makes not the slightest real difference, as surely one must see with a moment's reflection. To

be perfectly Just according to the highest human standard, it is not a question of whether I punish myself or another, for sins of which neither of us are guilty. The only true justice, as far as we understand it, consists in punishing *exclusively*, and *accurately* the guilty person.

We are not called upon to *understand* or *vindicate* the Atonement, but to *accept* it as the only way of salvation offered to us. We need never become apologists for God, or attempt to explain His Ways. Job's friends did this and were justly rebuked for it. If we have faith as a grain of mustard seed we shall know that God *must* be Just, and that there were reasons which have not been revealed to us, probably because we should not understand them, which made the Sacrifice of a guiltless Victim both *just* and *necessary*.

The *Gospel* is simply the proclamation of the "good news" to sinners that this Sacrifice is perfectly sufficient, without any additions or conditions at all, for the perfect pardon and acceptance with God of all who will claim their own interest in it. Whoever does this is saved—and commences his Christian life *from* the present possession (given him when he believes and accepts the Gospel) of Eternal Life. To this first

principle it is absolutely necessary in these perilous times to be faithful, if we would glorify God, and help and not hinder His Cause in the world. Although many no doubt have a saving faith in Jesus who have not attained to the assurance of it, yet this must be the result of ignorance or of sin, and is not to be excused in any. It can never be true humility, rather unwarrantable presumption, to doubt God's word. And none surely can plead want of comprehension of those elemental teachings of Scripture which are purposely adapted to the feeblest intelligence. Such as Jo. iii. 16, vi. 47, and hundreds more.

These are the things which are *essential*, and though it is a grievous mistake for Christians who understand the way of salvation, and are *in* that way, to be perfectly satisfied with that, and to desire nothing further, either in the way of knowledge or attainment—to remain for ever “babes in Christ”—still any teaching either as to holiness of life, or as to the worship of God that is not distinctly founded upon Gospel truth, can never be anything but most dangerous and delusive.

Delusive it must be, for true *holiness* can only spring from *Justification*, and is the fruit of the *Spirit*, who takes His abode in our hearts, creating us anew, when we believe. When the Jews asked the question “What

shall we *do* that we may work the works of God?" Jesus replied "*This* is the work of God, that ye believe on Him Whom He hath sent." That must be the *first* work. Other good works follow from it, springing out of the good treasure of the cleansed heart.

Worship also, is only possible for a converted man. Undeniably it is a higher thing than preaching, and is altogether different in its nature. But it is a fearful thought that many thus exalting worship theoretically, are themselves not at all in a position for it, being outside the Church, and *dead* in trespasses and sins.

Those who have but a "*form* of godliness" do not *say* that they "deny the power." But their actual denial of the power consists in this, that they are ignorant of its very existence. They place their confidence in outward rites, not knowing the spiritual realities of which these are the symbols.

"From such turn away."

CONCLUSION.

IF the object I have had in view in these Papers has been understood, it will be seen by those who having accepted my premises, have been led along the same line of thought, that at present the only practical remedy for the state of variance existing amongst the members of Christ's Church lies in the promotion of a more enlightened and Christian spirit, manifested (where no flagrant heresy prevents it) in acts of inter-communion between the brethren. If this principle were fully established, then, and not till then would the Church act with true authority, organization, and power.

It is therefore the solemn duty of every Christian seeing these things, and desiring to act as a peace-maker, to do all that in him lies to promote the spirit of love in the Church, to heal divisions, to remove obstacles in the way of union, to explain misapprehensions, to "speak evil of no man,"—above all, and before all, (for none of this can be done without it) to seek himself to know more fully a Personal Saviour,

and to draw others around *Him*. Our Religion should consist of one word—CHRIST. *Himself*—a *Person*. Not a system of doctrines about Him however correct—but *Himself*.

Would that our theology were that of Paul, who losing sight for a moment of all the "sound doctrine" of which he was such an able expositor, and such a staunch upholder, in the rapturous contemplation of the object of his faith, embodied the whole of his Creed in the exclamation—"I know *WHOM*" (not *what*) "I have believed!" In that knowledge lies our power.

Gathering round Himself we necessarily meet in love. We often hear this truth in these days. God has shown it to many of His children. *We want it acted upon*. It is already acted upon in a measure, yet there are still thousands of Christians in this country whose prejudices are keeping them outside the blessing which is beginning to descend; who know nothing of true Catholic fellowship; whose practice denies the belief they express "in the Communion of Saints;" who "could not," as they suppose, have participated in that glorious Communion Feast at the close of the Mildmay Conference of 1874, for which we thank God with such heartfelt confidence that it was but a pre-

lude to blessings which a few years back we should not have ventured to hope for. And shall we make no attempt by our own example and conversation to testify to them of the blessedness of a larger-hearted Christianity, which will be satisfied with nothing less than a full recognition, in act as well as theory, of every member of the Church of God?

Men have so long kept their eyes fixed on the truths mainly taught by their own sect, that not only have they distorted them, but have been blind to other truths. Thus the "proportion of faith" has been lost. Again, some have insisted that the Holy Ghost is limited to one stereotyped mode of operations in church government, or in worship. Therefore too many of the Sects believing that their own methods are necessarily the correct ones, maintain that all others must by the same necessity be wrong. Thus the "Brethren" have assumed it to be impossible that any one can pray spiritually in the words of another, *if* at least that other should have written down his prayer. And this of course causes a division between themselves and all Christians using a form of prayer. On the other hand many, by the all-importance they attach to a form, proclaim their ignorance of the Office of the Spirit to pray in His people.

Then again, whilst the Church of England has adopted the Ministry of Orders, but has left no room for the exercise of spiritual gifts independent of such Orders—the "Brethren" have availed themselves of the Ministry of Gifts, to the entire exclusion of the Ministry of Orders.

In speaking of the Ministry of Gifts, I would not be understood to imply that such gifts as are now exercised are similar to those of Apostolic days. Wherever the impartation of truth is concerned they are of the same nature; but in our own time the manifestation of such gifts are not *extraordinary*. That is, they are natural gifts, adapted, sanctified, consecrated to spiritual purposes: and these are such gifts as eloquence, perspicacity, brain-power of various kinds, &c. But in the infancy of the Church, when Christians were few in number, extraordinary gifts were obviously requisite—such, for instance, as the gift of tongues, and the interpretation of tongues, gifts of miracles, and of discerning of spirits, &c.:—and these were only conferred in Apostolic days. The Spirit often amongst the uneducated of our own day calls forth latent powers of mind in a manner that *appears* miraculous; but it is not miraculous in the ordinary sense of the word; whereas in the 1st Century the gifts were

distinctly so. This however did not make them a whit more truly valuable. In either case gifts are equally of Divine impartation. These were simply of a nature which the exigencies of the time required; but they were sometimes abused by the possessors of them, and diverted from their original purpose to be used for mere display (1 Cor. xiv.): the same feeling existing then as amongst some now, that such gifts were of a higher nature than others, because more wonderful in the estimation of the vulgar.

It would appear that women were also recipients of these gifts, (1 Cor. xi. 5) though they were not to make remarks or ask questions about the words of others: thus affording another proof that during the *régime* of miraculous gifts it was necessary *for a time* to put aside the laws of nature. Those therefore who now advocate the preaching of women, would in fact return to the exceptional arrangements of those peculiar times in days when God has *not* seen it fit to revive extraordinary powers. They quote in their support the *first half* of Joel ii. 28, naturally ignoring the rest of the verse. But when old men begin to see visions, and young men to dream dreams, it will be time enough, I think, for women to become preachers. That God has blessed such preaching to the conversion of souls,

proves nothing at all. If no efforts were blessed but such as were made by persons absolutely free from mistakes, it would be a poor look-out for this unfortunate world. But in more legitimate ways *more* good would be achieved, and to doubt this is simply want of faith. But I must apologise for this digression.

I have observed that the "Brethren" (who by the way do *not* countenance the preaching of women) have availed themselves of the Ministry of Gifts to the entire exclusion of the Ministry of Orders; and thus any systematic labours amongst them are impossible. I think those who most value them must feel thankful that though they are able to impart deeper teaching than any other sect, the mass of the people are not dependent upon *them* for instruction—or how would it have fared with them? The world would have been left absolutely uninfluenced by religion. It is therefore as a system a manifestly impossible one.

The non-recognition of the Pastorate appears a strange oversight, especially in those who believe themselves to have more faithfully than any other Christians reproduced the order of the early Church. Yet it must be borne in mind that in primitive times, the possessors of spiritual gifts, though not ordained or specially appointed to office by any ceremony, were

yet acknowledged as an authorised ministry, constituting a part of the Divinely organised Polity; and the exercise of their gifts was not a liberty indulged in from the absence of all rule. And in the same way, though gifts have ceased to be extraordinary, they might still be recognised as supplementing, not superseding the Ministry of Orders. In the Epistles we find evidence, I think, that the Ministry of Orders gradually superseded that of Gifts; and at one time a working of the double system appears to have prevailed, which tended in some of the churches to a disparagement of gifts—(1 Tim. iv. 14; 2 Tim. i. 6-8; 1 Thess. v. 19, 20.)

Whether upon the withdrawal of miraculous interference, the possessors of such spiritual gifts (for preaching, and speaking to edification) as are common to all periods of this dispensation, formally entered the ministry, or whether some of them exercised their gifts in a more occasional manner, we cannot now ascertain, and if we could, it would prove nothing, as abuses so soon obtained in the Church. But however this may have been, one thing is so plain from Holy Scripture, that it seems marvellous how those so well informed as the "Brethren" can overlook it; and that is the existence, by Divine appointment, even in Apostolic times, of a regular Ministry of Orders.

That such an irregular ministry as that of gifts should altogether supersede that of Orders, is manifestly impracticable and unscriptural, *unless*, of course, some peculiar exigencies should make such a state of things necessary. But ever since the Church fell into schism, its modes of operation have been entirely out of course ; so that now, as in each intermediate age, we should only regard the very best and wisest ecclesiastical arrangements that can be made, as *purely* PROVISIONAL.

All the Christian Sects are very imperfect, though each in God's great goodness has been permitted to supply one or other deficiency, and to teach some special truth, and so compensation has in some measure been made for the absence of that Authority and Ability to Rule, originally granted to the Church. Therefore although Order, Discipline, and Obedience to constituted authority, must where they can be carried out, be in strict accordance with the mind of the Spirit, as the fulfilment of His own Designs in the Polity of the Church as first organised by Him ; still, in the present day it would be utter folly to be in bondage to ecclesiastical routine in a parish where the clergyman neither holds nor teaches the doctrines necessary to salvation. This would be to subvert the

very first principles on which alone all true Church Polity can be based ; and to render its ultimate design subordinate to what is merely instrumental.

Looking at such questions in this light, we must see that Evangelical dissenters are not only useful, but have been absolutely necessary in this country, if souls were to be saved in the dark places where the way of salvation was not proclaimed in the parish church ; and indeed in other places, where from the want of elasticity in the services, and other arrangements in the Church of England, the Gospel could not reach the whole population, or at any rate not their *hearts*, the machinery not being adapted to their actual requirements.

The grand practical consideration must always be to have the *first* thing put *first* ; and the second, second ; and so on, as God gives us light. Whereas how continually do we find the hundredth consideration put first, whilst essentials go to the wall !

Even in the Jewish dispensation where the hierarchy was the only legalised channel of communication between God and man, we find that He provided compensation for the neglect and abuse of the law which were continually defiling His heritage, by raising up at frequent intervals strangers—some of them, such as

Elijah the Tishbite, not being even Israelites, much less priests—to take a higher place in grace than the priests did by right of law, and even as in the case of Elijah, and if I understand aright Exodus xviii. 12, in the case also of Jethro, to act in direct defiance of the outward law, but yet in obedience to the Divine Lawgiver, by offering sacrifices. We see a line of these distinguished Strangers commencing with Melchizedek, and including Jethro, and Job (who offered priestly intercession for his friends) and all the Prophets; and we see it culminating in Christ as the Stranger upon earth, and the Head of the Church in which is neither Jew nor Gentile—just as the Royal line culminated in Jesus the King of the Jews, and the line of Aaron in the Great High Priest.

Even so, in the Gospel dispensation, wherever the elders and deacons (which Offices are equally God's institution, although ministerial instead of priestly) have neglected or ill performed their work—whatever denominations they have belonged to—Jesus, as the Good Shepherd, has ever done the pastoral work *Himself*, by the agencies that seemed good to Him—by the feeble, and the unlearned, and the despised. He has ever done according to His blessed promise to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, (see Ezek. xxxiv.)

where everything that is specified as having been neglected by "the shepherds of Israel," He says He will do Himself. "For thus saith the Lord God, Behold I, even I, will both search my sheep and seek them out. . . . *I* will feed my flock, and *I* will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord God. *I* will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which is sick, . . . and there shall be showers of blessing."

And thus He still acts in His Church—triumphing over all such laws as He only intended to be conditional, and working mightily by many an agency the "shepherds" of *England* consider irregular.

But again I must come back to the Exclusive "Brethren," because the very valuable truths they hold make them perhaps the most important sect of the day; and more especially because it is on their teaching as to the Church as God's Assembly that I am anxious to make a few remarks.

It is my firm conviction that their theory as to the Authority originally intrusted to the Church is a true one: including as it does the ability to forgive and retain sins * granted to the disciples, and especially to

* See Appendix A.

Peter—although I cannot admit their claim to be exclusively possessed of this Power at the present day. But the burden of proof rests with themselves. It is not for us to prove that they have not these peculiar Powers, but for them to prove that they have them, before we can render them allegiance.

The old test ever stands true—"By their fruits ye shall know them:" and the fruits of the Spirit will manifest themselves in an assembly especially favoured by God, as in an individual saint so eminently blessed; and the first of these fruits is Love, "which is the bond of perfectness." Now is *Love* the distinguishing characteristic of the Exclusive "Brethren"? I ask the question in no unkindly spirit, as I trust is evident to my impartial readers, but only because it is our Lord's own test—"By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another." I think love is an influence that makes itself felt—moreover it is acted upon: and I have not felt its influence, neither have I seen its results as manifested by the Exclusive "Brethren" in a manner that leads me to the conclusion that they are more peculiarly led by the Spirit of Love than other Christians.

Again, if these "Brethren" alone represent the Apostolic Church, the Evangelistic and Missionary

spirit cannot fail to be very marked amongst them. But is this so? Has this agency been remarkably used in the Revivals of our own land or any other? These questions may be easily answered in the negative: and therefore without pursuing the subject any further I think it will be hardly premature to say that they have not justified their claims.

However they stand in a position of great advantage over the other sects in that not only is their faith an unusually correct one, but that they are all absolutely united in it. In this latter respect the Church of Rome and the Society of Exclusive "Brethren" are similarly constituted, being alike also in their zeal for minute theological definitions, and in the scientific completeness of their system; but they differ substantially in this—that whilst Rome admits gross error, the Exclusives err rather in the direction of over-soundness—to speak with a looseness they would indeed deprecate!—excluding all who do not agree with them on points, which, whether right or wrong, ought not to be regarded as essential to inter-communion.

The Roman Church considers herself to have always been in possession of the Authority and Power granted to Peter. The Exclusive "Brethren" believe this to have been indeed the rightful heritage of the true

Spiritual Church in all ages ; but that they alone, in these modern days, have claimed it on Scriptural grounds, and are therefore at present the sole legitimate possessors of it.

Now fairly to judge of these claims, it is necessary to see distinctly that the grand cause of the loss of Authority in the Church is its outward *disunity*. But its disunity has been caused to some extent by the admission of heresy. It was never therefore the Church which was infallible, but the Spirit who would have directed her if she had trusted solely to His Guidance ; relying upon that "Uction from the Holy One," by which she might have known "all things."

It is very remarkable that though the Exclusive "Brethren" *act* as a strictly infallible church, they yet acknowledge that "the Church, of course, may make mistakes. Measures taken in discipline may be hasty, slow, or erroneous. In fact it is with the Habitation of God in the Spirit collectively, as with the Christian individually. If the saints are, so the saint is, the temple of God. Now nobody in his wits could maintain that a Christian is exempted from evil or mistake, because the Holy Ghost dwells in him. It is exactly the same principle with the Assembly." (W. Kelly.) Now in these words the whole Ex-

clusive principle they contend for, and act upon, appears in my humble judgment to be unreservedly given up.

I must close these remarks with one more quotation from the same writer, with almost every word of which I most heartily concur.

“Supposing one could have every soul in communion holding precisely my views or yours on every topic, I should regard it as a very great calamity for the Church of God. . . . What could be more calculated to produce a false estimate of the state of the saints than all thus banded together with identical views, all crammed with just the same thoughts, satisfied with one another, and contemptuous to those outside who did not hold similar sentiments? I am supposing now every notion to be correct, and the things done to be according to the mind * of God. To my mind such a picture in no way answers either to Scripture or to the love of Christ.

“Brethren, let me be plain-spoken. The Church of God is not a citadel for the strong only, nor a niche for the wise and intelligent alone; it is not a front

* Here Mr. Kelly himself speaks *loosely*, and proves too much. If the Church thought and did everything “according to the mind of God” she could hardly be far wrong !

bench for those who have arrived at a certain maturity of holiness or knowledge."

I can desire nothing better for the "Brethren" than that they should follow out these words.

And if amongst all the varying and conflicting opinions of these perplexing times, we would truly honour the Spirit we must "cease from man," and trust implicitly to His teaching Who will then guide us into all truth. There is no vagueness nor indefiniteness about this course, because the Holy Ghost is a Real and Definite Person, here, in an especial manner in this Dispensation, on purpose to teach us through His Word. "The calm comprehensiveness of the Spirit of God," as Canon Bernard has so beautifully expressed it, is that which alone can "counteract the narrow partialities of the spirit of man." Where He teaches we shall be shewn the comparative and relative importance of different truths, so that we shall be led to put the *first* thing *first*, and so to build succeeding truths upon the main foundation.

"The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace."

There has been a tendency in the Church ever since the days of the Apostles, for men to put their trust in the decisions of human teachers, without each for himself keeping close to the only infallible Guide.* Error therefore increased in proportion as the true appeal became more remote. Thus has the Christian Church perpetuated the sin of Israel—"My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken Me, the Fountain of Living Waters, and hewed themselves out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." (Jer. ii. 13.)

It does not by any means follow that we may not derive instruction from the Spirit *through* human agency; but "*truly*" to "*wait upon God*" can be the only preservative against heresy or schism.

In confirmation of this principle it is interesting to observe that S. Ignatius whilst warmly commending the Ephesians for the unity and peace which reigned in their church, and the obedience to their Bishop which distinguished them, gives us the clue to this happy state of things in these words—"Neither do ye hearken to any one more than to Jesus Christ."

Had this ever been the characteristic of the Christian Church, she would have remained in visible unity, and

* See Appendix B.

would have retained the Authority derived from the abiding presence of the un-grieved Spirit. Whether physical signs and wonders would have been manifested in her we know not. But this at least is plain—that from the time she fell into schism the true Authority of the Church, as a united Assembly capable of Discipline, was taken away.

Not one of the Sections has any present claim to these Powers, and except that some hold more truth, or are governed on better principles than others, they all stand on precisely the same footing. Some of them may indeed be in a position to exercise sufficient Authority to make Discipline possible within the sphere of their own ecclesiastical jurisdiction; and if such powers as this were rightly used, if the Guidance of the Spirit were truly sought and relied on, we ought not to doubt that such decisions would be ratified in Heaven:—that a man put out of such a community for heresy would really be in a state of spiritual alienation, and ought, unless he repent, to be treated accordingly, having lost his claim to recognition as a Christian here.

But very few of the Christian Associations are able to exert such control as this. In the Church of England for instance excommunication for heresy would be impossible. A person might be excluded from

communion at one church for holding erroneous doctrine, which might however be shared by the clergyman of the next parish, at whose church he would be welcomed. So that excommunication if practised at all could only be carried out on the congregational system.

Until such Discipline can be recognised as the act of the united Church, it can judicially have no weight nor even existence. It is not that the Church does not possess the requisite powers, but rather that she is debarred from the exercise of them, which as a matter of fact comes to the same thing.

We cannot now discover what caused the very first open breach of Unity in the Christian Church. The theory of High Churchmen' that the authority of the General Councils ceased after the separation of the Eastern branch of it, shows an apprehension of the truth that it is disunity that has enfeebled the Church. But serious error had been introduced before then; and this was merely a schism in the outward, and by that time corrupted church. For not only was the intrusion of error great enough to be incompatible with the Rule of the Spirit, but it consequently rendered the decisions of what was at that date a heterogeneous assembly worthless.

From the Epistles of the Apostolic Fathers it appears that Schism in the Church was the evil which they had the greatest cause to fear, and against which they especially contended. And it does not seem to have been caused by any intrusion of error, but simply by the pride of heart of the Christians themselves. To this they continually attribute it, and to nothing else. In S. Clement's Epistle to the Corinthians—which church we know on the testimony of S. Paul to have been the first to manifest strong schismatic tendencies—he makes no reference to any heresy whatsoever, and therefore to no regulations for its correction; and though S. Polycarp, and still more S. Ignatius emphatically inveigh against Gnosticism, it is ever as an evil outside the Church, and the heretics are always described as being in no way associated with the Christians addressed, who are warned to "flee" them as they "would do so many wild beasts."

To Pride, and Pride alone are the divisions in these churches traced. Thus Clement writes to the Corinthians—"Ye were all of you humble-minded, not boasting of anything: desiring rather to be subject than to govern, . . . being content with the portion God had dispensed to you. . . . Thus a

firm, and blessed, and profitable peace was given unto you ; and an unsatiable desire of doing good, and a plentiful effusion of the Holy Ghost was upon all of you. . . . Ye contended day and night for the whole brotherhood. . . . Ye were sincere and without offence towards each other ; not mindful of injuries. All sedition and schism was an abomination unto you. . . . All honour and enlargement was given unto you ; and so was fulfilled that which is written, *My beloved did eat and drink, he was enlarged and waxed fat, and he kicked. From hence came emulation, and envy, and strife, and sedition ; persecution and disorder, war and captivity. So they who were of no renown, lifted up themselves against the honourable ; those of no reputation against those that were in respect ; the foolish against the wise, the young men against the aged.* “ Wherefore are there strifes, and anger, and divisions, and schisms, and wars, among us ? Have we not all one God and one Christ ? Is not one Spirit of Grace poured out upon us all ? Have we not one calling in Christ ? Why then . . . *are we come to such a height of madness, as to forget that we were members one of another ?* ” “ Let us then be kind one to another, according to the compassion and sweetness of Him that made us ! ”

This rebellious principle which we thus see destroying the peace of the Corinthian Church, and against which S. Clement testified in so noble and affecting a manner—this principle which is "heady, high-minded," "despising government, presumptuous, self-willed, not afraid to speak evil of dignities," is the same which first brought the curse into our world, and is still steadily operating towards its destruction.

It is most remarkable that these discordant elements in the Church were eventually subdued into outward harmony in the Roman branch of it—or rather crushed into a corpse-like inactivity—by the development of the very principle to which they owed their origin. By man in his pride usurping the Supremacy of the Holy Ghost, and openly declaring himself to be the successor of Christ upon earth. The recent declaration of Papal Infallibility is but the necessary sequel to such a daring claim.

The great importance which is attached by so-called "Catholics," whether Roman or Anglican, to the point whether the man who occupies the position of supreme head of the visible church is a layman or an ecclesiastic, is quite misplaced: and the disputes that have arisen upon it have been about words only. The Holy Ghost, and no *man*, whether he be styled Pope,

Bishop, or King, can bestow either Mission or Jurisdiction. Imposition of hands no longer confers powers unshared by other Christians; it merely symbolizes the consecration to an Office in which a man specially devotes himself, and such powers as God has already given him, to His service in the Christian Ministry.

In the ruin of the outward unity of the Church of God, we see the greatest triumph Satan has yet achieved. Whilst on the one hand in the visible church the human element has to such a vast extent supplanted the Divine—a lifeless ecclesiastical machinery becoming a substitute for vital power—on the other hand we cannot but observe different, but no less dangerous phases of the operation of the same fatal principle of pride, leading men to cast off all authority human and Divine, and to desire no law but their own will.

But whatever forms this principle may assume, it can only be counteracted in the Christian Church, by a return, in penitence and humility, to the Divine allegiance we have all of us more or less forsaken; recognizing the claims of human rulers as “of God,” wherever in these days of dire confusion it is possible to do so: remembering always that each dispensation

has begun with grace, and ended with judgment, because of man's abuse of the gift of God; and that even so must close the Dispensation of the Spirit. This is a solemn reflection.

The few, therefore, who desire to remain faithful, will not do so by attempting to return to the conditions of a bye-gone era, suited to a period when the Unity of the Spirit was still kept in the Bond of Peace, and claiming Authority which could only have been given conditionally on the maintenance of that unity; but by beginning as it were at the other end, in promoting Church fellowship, and in welcoming all true-hearted Christians in the Name of the Lord: not urging them to leave their denominations, which as *provisionary institutions* may be highly useful and beneficial; but teaching them to recognise a Bond above all such temporary divisions, which unites all the members of the One Body. They will not then interfere with each other's work, but play into one another's hands; and learning the special truths which each can teach, will grow in knowledge and in love, until the glorious day when "we all come into the unity of the Faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

We see an illustration of the alteration of duty consequent on the change of circumstances, in the conduct of the faithful remnant of Israel before the Babylonian captivity. They were not to stand out against all foreign intrusion, as some years before it would have been their duty to do—those that insisted on this course were punished with judgments—but they were commanded to submit patiently to a foreign yoke because the altered circumstances necessitated a postponement of God's covenanted promises to Israel.

In the same way, the promises to His Church will all be kept; and the ideal of many a saint among the "Brethren," and in the Roman Communion, will be realised above their highest dreams. In a succeeding Dispensation Mr Darby may find himself "judging" even angels! and Lacordaire will see his visions of the exceeding beauty and glory of the city set upon a hill, all out-shone by the splendour of the New Jerusalem, and his loyalty will be abundantly satisfied when the Church receives the homage of all the kings of the earth. In the meantime we must wait.

And now in bringing to a close this plea for Church-fellowship, I must add that no one can be more fully aware of the importance of the subject, and of my own inability to do it justice, than I am myself.

But its importance is so evident that it can hardly be enhanced : whilst if its principles could be illuminated with a clearness that must render them obvious to every intelligence—if they could be enforced with an ability that never failed to bring conviction to every mind—if they could be demonstrated with a skill that would leave no objection unanswered—this assent of the intellect would not remove a single prejudice, nor profit a single soul if the Love of God were not shed abroad in the *heart* by the Power of the Holy Ghost.

To Him Who can glorify Himself by the weakest effort of the feeblest member of His Body, I leave the application of such Truth as I have written ; feeling quite sure of His Sympathy in the Cause so near His own Heart.

And in Conclusion I must observe what to my mind is deeply interesting—that when men attempted in their pride to build a lasting trophy to the glory of confederate humanity, the Lord in scattering them justified the principle that "union is strength," by saying—"Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do : *and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do.* Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand

one another's speech." If God Himself thus bore witness to the power in unity of even unregenerate man—what achievements I ask might not be expected from the united Church?

And it is still more interesting to notice that the means taken to scatter this dangerous confederacy—the confusion of tongues—is exactly reversed when the Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost, when the *building of God's spiritual House commenced*, began to "gather together in one the children of God which were scattered abroad." The "multitude" then "*came together*" from all parts of the earth, to hear the glad tidings of reunion proclaimed "every man in his own tongue." Through the agency of the subsequent gifts of tongues the same uniting work was carried on. And shall it now cease? Shall our tongues be silent? The gift of the Spirit was especially associated with language, that all might tell of the "wonderful works of God." Therefore by the same Spirit, let us speak boldly in the cause of Church fellowship in the universal language which appeals to all hearts—a language in which there need be no Shibboleths—and of which the Alpha and Omega shall be JESUS.

And may we by His Grace speak still more distinctly by our lives!—walking "worthy of the vocation

wherewith we are called ; with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love ; endeavouring to keep the Unity of the Spirit in

THE BOND OF PEACE."

"O Lord, who hast taught us that all our doings without charity are nothing worth; . . . Pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of charity, the very bond of peace and of all virtues, without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before Thee: Grant this for Thine only Son Jesus Christ's sake. Amen."

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX A.

It may be as well to give some explanation of the views of the Exclusive "Brethren" on this point, for the information of such as may not be acquainted with them. I therefore subjoin the following extract from what I have written on the subject in the unpublished part of this work, to which I have alluded in the Preface.

They hold that the Church was not only a body of believers who had been made partakers of Eternal Life in Christ, and were united to Himself for ever, but that as a community upon earth, inhabited by the Spirit, they were in possession of Divine powers by which they were warranted in judging questions of doctrine and practice, which should arise in their assembly (or rather God's Assembly) on the principle laid down in Matt. xviii. 17. And that in accordance with the assurance of the following verse they were justified in believing that their act of forgiveness, or

excommunication, as the case might demand, would be ratified in Heaven. That in fact, their judgment was that of Heaven : and that from God they held this commission to act in His Name.

This authority they believe to have been first entrusted to the Apostles, and they interpret in a very similar manner to the Roman Catholics the words addressed by our Lord to Peter in Matt. xvi. 19. But with this important difference, that they do not believe that Peter or the other Apostles had any successors as a sacerdotal class, with powers peculiarly their own. For indeed the Apostles themselves had not such powers as individuals. The power was vested in the Church as a whole, though wielded at times by an Apostle as a representative of the rest. Thus in Jo. xx. we see the same authority conferred on the "disciples ;" and in 1 Cor. v. 13 the exercise of it is recommended to the Corinthian Church ; and afterwards in 2 Cor. the same matter, but now as having been judged by them, is again alluded to, whilst S. Paul speaks of the punishment of the offender as having been "inflicted of many," and adds that "to whom ye forgive anything, I forgive also : for if I forgave anything, for your sakes forgave I it in the person (or "sight," margin) of Christ."

That the Apostles as those called to lay the foundation of the spiritual House had a special authority of their own, over and above that which they possessed only as members of the Church, is not denied by the "Brethren," nor that they had some personal powers; but these ceased with themselves, and certainly it would be evident enough if any now were endowed with them.

The right to forgive and retain sins was not however one of these. And this the "Brethren" consider is still the prerogative of the Church of God if only she would claim it, returning to her original dependence on the Spirit as her Director, and Power for worship. This they believe that they themselves have done, and therefore that they alone stand in the position which the whole Church was called to occupy, and have Divine authority to excommunicate. They do not hold that such excommunication can dispossess a man of Eternal Life if he has received it, but that here on earth he pays the penalty of his sin in being treated as if outside the Church—as "a heathen man and a publican." Neither do they hold that Christians who have left them, or who have never joined them, are at all in this position. This want of apprehension, as they consider it, though it necessitates, virtually, excom-

munication (for such persons may not break bread with them), is, *they say*, not to be confounded with it ; their excommunication being considered by them a real, and a tremendous act.

APPENDIX B.

PRACTICALLY there now exists amongst the majority of professing Christians, a tacit denial of the supreme fact which distinguishes the present Dispensation—viz., that the Holy Ghost is present to lead and teach every individual member of the Church of Christ, who will submit to His Authority.

An instance of this ignorance is to be found in a truly melancholy history of the religious experiences of a clergyman who “made the Journey” “to Rome and back” and wrote an account of it which appeared in a serial form in “The Day of Rest” for 1873. It is no doubt only one out of thousands of such cases, but is interesting and touching from the frankness with which he tells the story.

He starts with the assumption—and through all the course of his varying opinions, to these premises at least he remains faithful—that the cardinal points of the faith—and he expressly names amongst these “the doctrines of the Trinity, the Atonement, . . . and original sin”—“are not clearly taught dogmatically in the Bible.” This displays a want of acquaintance with

the mere letter of Holy Scripture, which indeed a little careful reading without any supernatural assistance might correct ; but it is also a result of the constant habit of mind which led him to look solely to human teachers for instruction.

He says he "left the English church because" besides other failings, as he considered them, "all her faults culminated in the absence of any infallible power for interpreting the original revelation of Christ." And he justly observes in another place—"Once granting the reality of the Christian Revelation, can it be believed that God has left us without any clear, intelligible, and certain means for ascertaining the real doctrines taught in that revelation? This, I saw, was the one problem before me."

At last, however, in the Roman church, he discovered "that her claim to infallibility was of a nature to destroy the validity of human reason as a guide to belief and conduct ;" and in her internal administration was still less justified. "Gradually as this came upon me, the shock was of terrific force. Is it to be conceived, I cried out to myself in my misery, that all my expectations of finding a trust-worthy guide are no better than a dream? If Christianity is a Divine Revelation is it possible that there exists no means whatever for

knowing with even moral certainty what Christianity is? Have I been right in holding that a revelation implies the existence of some infallible explanation of its doctrines? *Or are we driven back helplessly upon the obscurities of the Bible, to find our way through them as best we may?* Has Rome no more real pretence to be an infallible guide than those Protestant sects which profess that each converted soul is taught infallibly by the Holy Spirit through Whose operation it has been regenerated? What could I do?"

What indeed! if he considered the Living Word of God to be an insufficient Rule of Faith. "To whom could I apply?" the bewildered man exclaims; and though he does add that he could "only cry to God Himself in his silent sorrow," yet it was the cry of one who as we have seen scouted the very thought of reliance on the only Divine Teacher.

The dreary sadness of the following passage seemed to make me feel a new force in the simple words "*Grieve* not the Spirit."—"It was impossible that the Roman infallibility could be tenable. . . , Where, then, was I to go, and whither could I turn? What could I do but humble myself before the incomprehensibleness of God, and be still? What profit was it to beat myself against the bars of my prison-house, and

cry out to God, 'Why hast Thou made me thus?' . . . I could not help again looking out over the whole wilderness of human life; its myriads of past ages, its unnumbered millions now scattered over the world, in all their ignorance, . . . and their sins; moving onwards to some better life by seemingly imperceptible degrees. I shivered as I found myself, with all my own ignorances and faults, involved in my own share in this mysterious conflict and darkness; and at times I could not help crying aloud, "Oh, my God! what is it? what is it? Why art Thou a hidden God? Why do I cry to Thee and Thou hearest not?"

Yet all this time, whilst he was groping in disappointment, misery, and darkness, the Infallible Guide for whom he sighed—even the Comforter Himself—was vainly proffering His aid!

And the saddest part of his history, till now at least, all so sorrowful, is that when at last, after many years, he not only returns to the Church of England, but resumes a parochial charge, he appears, instead of being any gainer by this change, merely to have stifled the consciousness of the truth that once he held—that God could not have left His Church without an Infallible Teacher.

He gives it as his present conviction that the sole

ground of superiority which the last phase of his religious opinion can claim over the preceding one, is that "ordinary Protestant orthodoxy can be shown to be in harmony with the substantial tendencies of the Gospels and Epistles, and not to contradict the laws of reason. . . . The deficiency of Biblical proof in the Roman doctrine might be fatal, because all reasonable probabilities were against it; while a *similar deficiency might* leave Protestant doctrines untouched, because all *reasonable probabilities* were in their favour." (!) And yet, as I have already quoted from Archbishop Whately, "nothing short of reasonable *certainty* ever satisfies reasonable men, in any matter that they have really at heart."

Throughout his career it never appears to have occurred to him that assistance might be found in the Holy Ghost—nor does he now see that it is not possible that a God who could love mankind sufficiently to give His Son to die for them, could then calmly leave them all to perish for want of instruction as to how that Death should practically benefit them.

Now the narrator of these experiences in his search of a Creed, so far as regards his ignorance of the Office of the Spirit, may fairly be taken as a representative of the large majority of the religious world, or I

should not have noticed his case. It is this ignorance which causes so many people to be "ever learning, and never coming to a knowledge of the truth."

No complaints of the insufficiency of Scripture are ever made by those who, relying upon Divine Teaching, have staked their eternal destiny upon the discovery in its pages alone of the Way of Salvation. Neither do we who have done this ever cease to find the Word of God to be amply sufficient as our Rule of Faith, as well as our Rule of life; nor ever can when once it has been received by us "not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost."

ERRATA.

Page 14, line 3, for "presented" read "represented."

Page 42, line 10, for "even" read "ever."

„ line 18, for "religions" read "religious."

Page 59, line 5, for "Intercession" read "Invocation;" and in
next line, for "was" read "were."

